

THE
HEART
OF
KENJI
TOKUTOMI

KENJIRO TOKUTOMI

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THE HEART OF NAMI-SAN

The Heart of Nami-San

(HOTOTOGISU)

A Story of War, Intrigue and Love

By KENJIRO TOKUTOMI

English Version with Introduction
by ISAAC GOLDBERG



BOSTON
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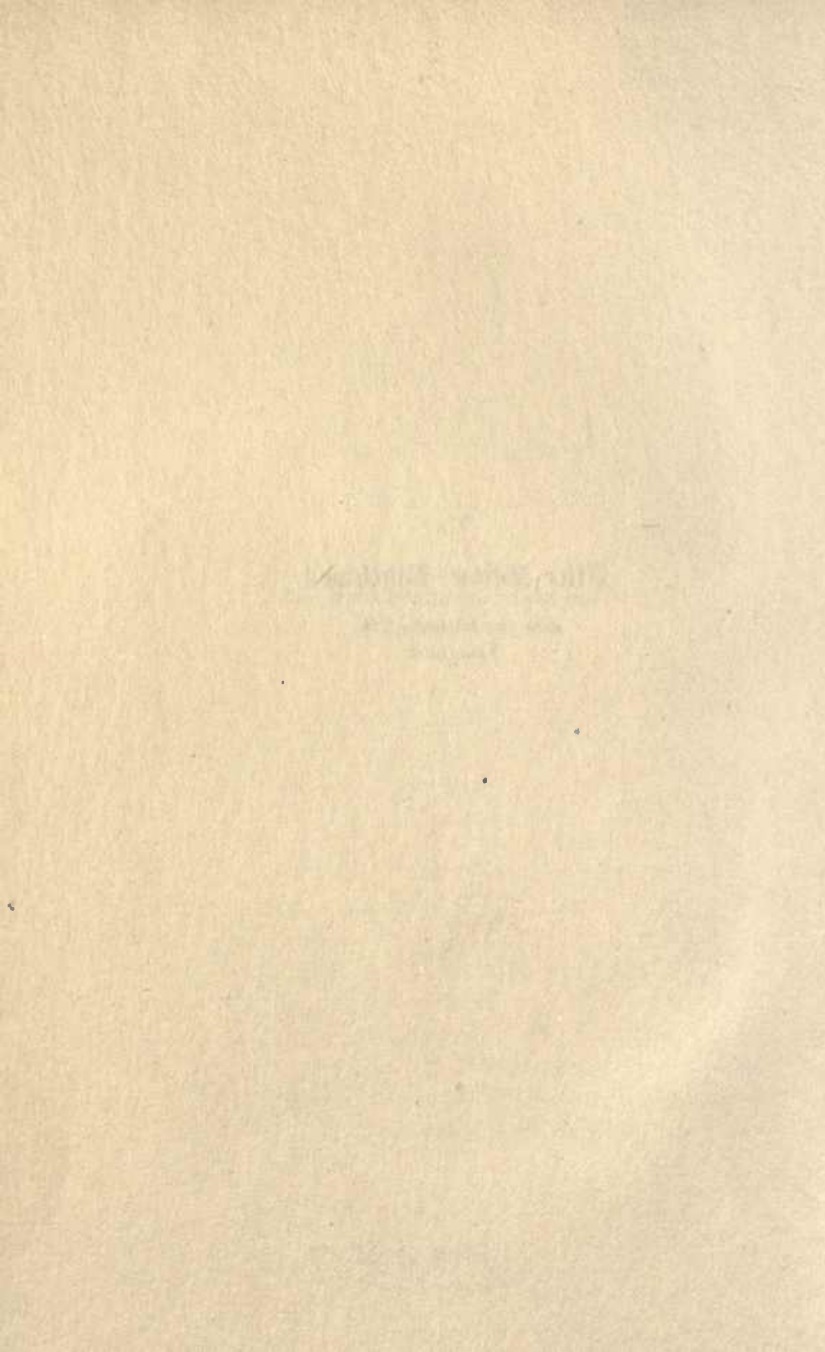
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To
Alice Stone Blackwell

*with the Esteem of the
Translator*

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

WITH the rapid rise of Japan as a power, especially since the outbreak of the present conflict, has come an increase of interest in the land of the Rising Sun that has not been slow to show itself in the number of books published about Japan. For many years before the war, indeed, Nippon has always been a source of picturesque study and that strange pleasure which comes from an acquaintance with things exotic,—a pleasure often mingled, no doubt, with a sense of our own superiority over the peoples we happen to be reading about. Many of us, too, without knowing a single word of Japanese (except, perhaps, “Banzai,” which literally means “ten thousand years” and in practise corresponds to our “hurrah” or shouts of good wishes and victory) have long discoursed quite knowingly about jinrikishas, Japanese prints, Fujiyama, Madame Butterfly, and even hummed the Japanese “national hymn,” — the one, at least, that Sullivan announces with those enchanting strokes of the kettle-drum in the overture to “The Mikado.” We have heard something, too, about that ticklish process known as harakiri, and even seen it suggested in the realistic “movies!” But how near to the real Japan has all this brought us? How near to the flesh and blood crea-

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tures like ourselves, with our same joys and despairs, our same aspirations, — how near to the men and women that love and hate and cheat and intrigue and by other similar tokens show that we are brothers and sisters under the skin? What do we know of the Japanese literature that is reflecting modern Japanese life? Something of their stage, particularly the classical stage, has come to our knowledge through various interpretations of the “Noh;” a few stray books and newspaper articles have mentioned the contemporary drama. Art, perhaps, has been better favored. Of the modern Japanese novel, however, we know nothing.

This should lend added interest, then, to one of the most successful books written in Japan in recent years. A book that has sold hundreds of thousands of copies in Japan alone, and that has gone into more than a hundred editions, must contain something that reaches to the heart of a Japanese problem. Such a book is the present novel, “The Heart of Nami-San,” by Kenjiro Tokutomi, long known as one of Japan’s leading novelists. Tokutomi, because of his leadership of the movement to introduce Western thought into the minds of his countrymen, and because of certain literary resemblances and influences, has been called the Japanese Tolstoi. “The Heart of Nami-San,” the Japanese title of which is “Hototogisu,” is looked upon as his masterpiece.

The original title itself is at once symbolic, onomatopoeic and deeply expressive. As onomatopoeia it represents the cry of the Japanese cuckoo, plaintive

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in sound and haunting in portent. Among the Japanese, we are told, the cuckoo is considered as the symbol of hopeless love, consuming itself in vain effort and suspense. The actual significance of the characters employed to form the word are "sooner death!" This, indeed, is the name that has been given to the French translation of the work.

In order to appreciate the story to the full we should remember that the matter of marriage and particularly the part played in it by the parents-in-law in Japan has been far different from the customs of our own country. One writer upon the history of Japan and its culture explains that "The Japanese married woman is no longer considered the daughter of her parents but as the daughter of her parents-in-law. And often her mother-in-law maltreats her, imposing the most disagreeable duties and at times even hating her. Ill betide her who should dare to cry out against the persecution; her lack of filial obedience would be regarded as a crime. More than one man in Japan has been forced to repudiate a beloved wife whom his mother found not docile enough and too high-spirited."

Another brilliant French writer, in a work that has been crowned by The Academie Française (Ludovic Naudeau, in *Le Japon Moderne: Son Evolution*) gives an even more vivid picture of the general position of woman in modern Japanese society. "In Japan," he tells us, "the social unit is never the individual, but always the family. No matter what should happen, the children may never be removed

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from the paternal family, the only one that counts, and must there celebrate the cult of their ancestors. Here, too, we find striking analogies between the constitution of the Japanese family and that of the family in Greek and Roman antiquity. In the Japan of our days, as in the *Cité Antique* that Fustel de Coulanges has so well studied, the young girl, from the moment of her marriage, is severed from all ties and all legal relationships binding her to those who have given life to her. She leaves her home forever and is adopted by her husband's family. . . . But should any dispute arise between her and her husband, and divorce result therefrom, she can *in no case whatsoever* take her children with her." The italics are those of M. Naudeau.

We quote this passage not because the question of children is involved in the novel here presented, but to show one important phase of the subjection of woman in Japan. More to our chief purpose is another passage from the same delightfully written, informative volume.

"It is the duty of the legitimate wife to rise before her husband each morning and to direct the work of all the household servants in the daily tasks, taking part in them herself. She must consider herself first of all as her husband's servant, not eating with him unless he deigns to invite her. She must, moreover, submit blindly to the orders of her lord and master's mother, and these are very often of a most imperious nature; national custom, in fact, requires her to behold in her mother-in-law a spiritual directress; Jap-

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anese mothers retain, as long as they live, a singular power over the minds of their sons; they can easily obtain the repudiation of a rebellious daughter-in-law."

From the same authority we learn that the question of divorce is a most serious one in Japan. Among the common people fifty per cent of the marriages end in divorce. Nor is it rare for men and women to marry five or six times during their lives. Naturally to these questions are related those of prostitution and concubinage in Japan; these problems, however, are of no direct concern to us here. Most important to remember, for better appreciation of this novel, is the fact that the two great traditional virtues of the Japanese are the cult of ancestors and filial devotion. This helps us to understand much of what the hero and heroine do in the pages that follow.

We must not, however, make the error of placing this eastern empire alongside our western yardsticks and measuring its morals or its manners exclusively by our standards. Yet the great reception accorded to the tale which in our version we call "The Heart of Nami-San," and the immense popularity which it still enjoys, show that it struck to the very core of a national question.

As to the origin of the noted tale we are enlightened by a full statement from the author himself. Upon the occasion of the appearance of the hundredth edition of the novel Tokutomi took the opportunity of telling the circumstances attending the genesis of "Hototogisu."

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The author relates that the first idea of the story came to him while he was sojourning at Zushi, in the province of Sagami, at hotel Yanagiya, whither had come also a convalescing woman accompanied by a child. It was the height of the summer season and all the hotels were overcrowded. Tokutomi felt compassion for the woman, who could find no place, and arranged with his wife to yield part of their apartments to the sick lady. Instead of a partition, a mere bamboo blind separated them, and all conversation, of course, could be heard. The woman, about thirty-four or thirty-five years old had suffered much. It was from her lips that the story came which was later to be embodied in "Hototogisu." From her Tokutomi heard of the repudiation of a daughter-in-law because of her illness, of the husband's grief, of the indignation felt by the father of the girl, his building a special villa for her, his trip with her to Kyoto and Osaka before her death, the refusal of the Kawashima flowers, and other details. As the teller of the tale came to the end of her story she burst into tears, and seemed to say, "Yes, I don't care to be born a woman again!" The novelist was much affected by what he had seen and heard. "So that whatever insipid there is in my novel," he wrote, "is due to my own inability; and if, despite that, there is anything that engages the reader, I got that from the mouth of a woman, one summer's night: it is Nami herself that gives it to you, dear reader.

. . . . "In sum, my rôle has been simply that of a telegraph wire, — that of a transmitter."

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“Hototogisu” is a book of love, war, intrigue, satire, passion, struggle, defeat, victory. It abounds in pages of excellent character study, in moments of genuine humor, in paragraphs of charming poetry. Founded upon a real tale, its essential realism does not prevent touches of charming symbolism and the engaging appearance of the author’s own opinions and comments.

The very opening of the book contains a charmingly symbolic touch. From the hotel at which she and her husband are stopping, Nami is watching the beautiful sunset. (When an Italian next stops you and tells you to see Naples ere you die, ask your Japanese friend about Fujiyama.) Her eye is struck by two clouds, rising together in the sky. Slowly the cloudlets leave the peaks of Akagi, shining in the setting sun like two golden butterflies, winging together through the air. The sun sets; the clouds turn purple and the cold evening breeze arises, parting them. For a few moments they sail in the darkening sky; the smaller of the clouds grows gradually smaller still, and at last disappears. The other cloud changes from purple to ash-gray. Night has come.

What are these clouds but Nami and Takeo? What is the glorious sunset but a forestate of their own sorrow, following so close across the threshold of a happy marriage? What is the cold evening wind but the blighting breath of Chijiwa and the mother-in-law, that separates the lovers even as the wind parts the clouds? And when the smaller of the clouds disappears in the distance, who is it but Nami’s ailing

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self, dying at last when she had been separated from her husband? And what is the ash-gray cloud but Takeo, left alone in his night of sorrows?

So happy, so natural, so unobtrusive a symbolic summary of a tale at its very beginning, all within the space of a couple of hundred words, is hard to meet anywhere. Thus, in a literary as well as a literal sense, does the beginning contain the end.

The author's satire against the elements in Japanese society that are not averse to growing rich at the nation's expense reveals conditions in the east that are not unknown in the west. Indeed, the book appeals to the western reader in a surprising degree, despite the customs upon which the novel is founded. In recent times Japan has changed in standing before the nations of the world; it has fought Russia and won; it is now fighting Germany. But the hearts that beat on every page of "Hototogisu" run with the same red blood that coursed through the hearts of centuries ago; the passions that spring therefrom talk to us through the barriers of custom and language. The American reader will find much to like in the tale of Nami and Takeo because, at bottom, the sufferings and joys of love are much the same the world over.*

ISAAC GOLDBERG

Roxbury, Mass.

July, 1918.

* This version is based upon continental translations.

Part I

CHAPTER I

On Their Honeymoon

FROM the third story veranda of the Chigira Hotel at Ikao, the renowned hot springs resort of the province of Kozuke, a young lady stands gazing at the enchanting view that stretches beneath the rays of the setting sun. She looks like a girl of eighteen, only for her artistic head-dress, with her tresses crowned by a dignified *marumagé*,¹ thus revealing the married woman. She wears a gown of ash-colored crape, open at the neck and at the wrists, showing an elegant bodice of pale green silk. The contrast of these two colors produces a most delicate effect, but no more delicate than that which may be discerned between the pallor of her face and her jet black eyebrows, which almost unite in a single arch. Her agile, supple body, the genteel expression of her glance, the perfect oval of her aristo-

¹ The 'marumagé' is the round style of head-dress belonging to a married woman. The 'shimada' is the style assumed by singers, geishas and young girls of elegance. The 'sokuhatsu' is the European fashion, indiscriminately adopted by the married and unmarried.

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cratic profile, call to mind a flower: not the plum blossom that fearlessly defies the cold blasts of the north wind, nor the cherry blossom whose petals float gaily to the ground, like butterflies, in the fruitful awakening of spring, but of a diffident little daisy opening in the twilight of a warm summer evening.

The hills of Nikko and Ashio are silhouetted in the west against a fiery sky, and nearby the summits of the isolated peaks Onoko, Komochi and Akagi glisten in an aureole of golden rays. The cawing of a flock of crows rising in flight from a neighboring thicket spreads clear, piercing notes; two small clouds, bathed in fire, detach themselves from the peak of Akagi. The lady with the pale face notices the two white cloudlets and fixes her gaze upon them as if to follow their course.

At their first appearance they were so small and so close together that she might have folded her arms about both of them. . . Now they rise, rise, each by itself, into the immensity of the resplendent blue, always near together, like two butterflies with golden wings. The sun sinks behind the distant hills, the evening breeze blows, and the two wandering clouds seem to be enveloped by a pale, rose-colored nimbus.

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Suddenly they separate, wandering far off, scurrying in the violet-colored heavens. After a few moments the smaller of the clouds, unable to rise higher and floating toward the horizon, disappears without leaving a trace, as if by magic. Above, the other cloudlet, which no longer shines, wanders in solitude, opaline in the gray of dusk, as if without a goal.

Night falls rapidly, mantling the distant hills and veiling the violet blue of the sky. . . The pale face of the lady is the only white, almost luminous note in the sombre monotony of the darkness.

“Miss! . . . Pardon me . . . how forgetful of me!” exclaimed old Iku gaily, coming into the room. “Madame! Here I am, back again. How dark it is! Madame Nami, where are you?”

“Here I am,” replied the young lady with a start.

“What! Still outside? Come in directly, madame. Colds are dangerous. Hasn’t the baron returned yet?”

“What can have happened to him?” murmured Nami, as she closed the door. “Iku, we had better send somebody to meet him.”

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“Madame is right. I’ll go at once.”

Iku, who had in the meantime been groping about for a match, lighted the lamp; someone’s soft footfalls were heard coming up the stairs and a girl hurried into the room with a letter, which she handed to Iku.

“Thanks. The baron is somewhat late. Please send a boy to look for him. Madame, here is a letter.”

“A letter from my father! . . . But why doesn’t Takeo come?” sighed the lady, gazing at the well-known handwriting on the envelope.

“A letter from my master?” asked Iku. “How I’d like to know what news it brings! He must have written some funny things, as usual.”

The girl went out after having closed all the windows and stirred the fire, while Iku placed into a wall-closet a bundle of linens that she had brought, and approached the lady, saying with a sigh, “How cold it is here! What a difference from Tokyo!”

“Do you really think so, Iku? Cherry trees blossom here in the month of May! Come, sit down closer to me.”

“With your permission,” murmured the old woman respectfully, taking a seat at the side

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of her mistress; then, looking at her with an expression of deep emotion and affection, she added in a louder voice, "It's all so much like a dream when I recall that the lady before me, so elegant in her *marumagé*, is the same creature that I rocked in my arms! It seems only yesterday that while your mother was dying, a little baby, sitting in my lap, cried 'Mamma!'"

And her eyes brimming with tears at the sadness of the recollection, the poor woman continued, "On the day of your wedding I could not help thinking how happy your mother would have been to see her daughter so beautiful in her bridal clothes."

Iku wiped her eyes, while the lady bowed her head, engrossed in thoughts of painful regret. By the dim light of the lamp the jewel in her wedding ring shone upon her small hand.

The old woman raised her glance and spoke in a timid voice.

"Forgive me. I spoke thoughtlessly. I'm going into my second childhood. Madame . . . dear madame, how much you have suffered in your youthful years! It's wonderful that you should have survived so many sad happenings! . . . Ah! But from this day forward everything will be so beautiful, so sweet for

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you. Your husband is so affectionate and so good!"

At this moment the voice of the girl was heard crying from the foot of the stairs, "The baron has returned."

"Heavens, how tired I am!" exclaimed a young man of about twenty-three, dressed in European fashion, while he lay aside his Japanese sandals on the threshold and advanced with a bow and a smile toward the young woman who had already come forward to meet him. Suddenly he turned, as if struck by a thought, and said to a boy who had followed him, "You may go, my lad. But first give the madame those flowers."

"Oh, how beautiful!" exclaimed Nami gaily.

"What magnificent azaleas!" added Iku. "Where did you find them, Baron?"

"I should say they *are* magnificent. Nami-san,² look at this yellow-golden one. Tomorrow you'll arrange them yourself, as only your little fairy fingers can! . . . And now you must excuse me; I'm off to take a bath."

Some moments after the baron had left Iku broke the silence.

² 'San' is a contraction of 'Sama.' It is equivalent to Misa or Mr., being used for both sexes, and is an honorary suffix. 'Ko,' which occurs later, is also an honorary particle, added to the first name of upper class women.

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"The baron is so happy, so full of life! All the naval officers are high-spirited fellows, aren't they, Madame Nami?"

The young wife smiled without replying, as she carefully brushed the coat that her husband had taken off, and after having furtively touched it with her lips she placed it in the closet.

A little later, quick, heavy steps were heard upon the staircase, and the young man entered, exclaiming gleefully, "How much better I feel now!"

"The baron took his bath quite quickly," observed Iku.

"Naturally! . . . Men are so much quicker than women!"

His hearty laughter still echoed through the room as, aided by his wife, he donned an elegant striped, embroidered *kimono*. Then, tailor fashion, he sank down upon the cushions³ with a deep sigh of relief and rubbed his cheeks gently with both hands. He wore his hair short and his round head had a dark chestnut color, while his face, tanned by the sun, looked as red as an apple. His eyebrows were deep black,

³ The Japanese ordinarily sit down with their knees close together on the mat, resting their backs against their heels. To sit down tailor-fashion is a sign of great intimacy.

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his eyes sparkled with life, and despite a thick mustache his face preserved a childish expression that invited people to smile at him.

"A letter for you, dear," said Nami, handing him the message.

"From my father, I believe." The young man arose slightly from the cushions and opened the letter, from which fell a small, sealed envelope. "Here's a little letter for Nami-san . . . It seems that they're all well at Akasaka. Ah! Ah! As jolly as ever! I imagine I can hear his very voice!" And with a smile he laid aside the letter.

"Iku, my father charges me to tell you to be very careful with your health, because, since you're not used to this climate, your rheumatic pains might come back."

"How good it is of him to keep me so well in mind," replied the old woman, who was just finishing her preparations for the evening meal.

"How welcome food is," exclaimed Takeo, "after an outing that has lasted all day long! I ate only two rice tarts and I'm as hungry as a wolf . . . What do you call this fish, Iku? Do you think it's what is known in this province as *yamame*?"

"Yes, sir. And it's really very delicious.

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Taste some of this rice, too. The baron seems to be quite starved!"

"Naturally. Just imagine. After having climbed to the top of Mount Soma I crossed to Futatsu-take. I was among the rocks of Byobu when I met the boy you sent after me."

"You went as far as that?" exclaimed Nami.

"Yes. What a beautiful view you get from Mount Soma. On one side stretches a vast valley crossed by the silver ribbon of the Toné, the largest river in Japan; on the other you behold an endless chain of hills, and in the distance, above their summits, I could make out indistinctly the snowy cap of Fujiyama. If I were a poet, I would have dared to defy our Hitomaro' . . . What a pity that he's been dead for more than a thousand years! . . ." And Takeo laughed heartily.

"How beautiful it must be! I, too, should like to go up there . . . with you," said Nami with a sigh.

"Oh, oh! If my little Nami-san could ever climb up so high I'd have her decorated with the order of the Golden Hawk, awarded for feats of extraordinary valor. Really, never in my

* 'Hitomaro.' Noted poet of the VII and VIII centuries, who served the emperors Tito and Mommu, and died at Iwami around 729. He is honored as the god of poetry, and has a temple at Akashi (Harima.)

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life have I seen so rocky and steep an ascent! There are at least ten chains for you to get hold of to help you climb. That's not difficult for me, for at the naval school at Etajima I learned how to climb up the smooth masts of the war-ships and to hang from the rigging but I'm sure that your little feet have never touched as much as the even ground of Tokyo."

"Takeo!" interrupted Nami, smiling, while her face flushed a deep red, "you forget the lessons in gymnastics that I had at school."

"Oh, the gymnastics lessons at a girls' school are hardly to be reckoned, especially such as are given at an aristocratic institution like the Peeress! I remember having visited the place, where I saw a large group of girls going through a number of exercises, all in time with one another, a fan in their hands, while other girls, to the accompaniment of a piano, were singing the national hymn. At first I thought it was a figured dance, but I learned afterwards that you called that game gymnastics." Takeo smiled.

"You shouldn't speak like that," implored Nami, who was becoming embarrassed.

"Allow me to finish . . . I saw there, aside of Yamaki's daughter, a most beautiful girl who

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still wore her hair in long, loose locks over her shoulders; do you know who that girl was? She had on a plum-colored gown . . . and she was dancing, dancing away without deigning a single glance at the unknown visitor. I'm positive that she was my sweet little Nami-san! . . . What? Don't you like what I'm saying, even now?"

"But, Takeo, you're saying such things. . . . Do you know Yamaki's daughter very well?"

"Some time ago my father did her father a favor, and he continues to come to our house. . . You've become silent again, Nami. What is the matter?"

"But you're speaking, aren't you?" answered Nami, smiling.

"There, there. Husband and wife must never quarrel," observed Iku with a laugh. "I'll have some tea ready in a moment and let peace be declared!"

CHAPTER II

Nami Kataoka

THE young man to whom we were introduced in the preceding chapter is the Baron Takeo Kawashima; the lady is Nami Kataoka, first-born daughter of Viscount Ki Kataoka, the renowned general. Baron Kawashima, a naval officer, enjoying a brief furlough, has come to Ikao with his wife and her servant, good old Iku, formerly her nurse.

Nami's mother had died when the little girl was only eight years old, and now she could recall but dimly the features of the dear departed; but fresh indeed was the recollection of her caresses and of the words she had spoken from her death-bed to the little child, holding the little trembling hand in her own cold clasp. "My little darling, your mamma is now going away to a far, far country. You must promise me that you will be good, and that you will love your papa and little Ko-chan ever so much. . . ." And fresh, too, was the memory of the mother's tears that had bathed her childish cheeks, while

the voice of the dying woman, now very weak, murmured, "Will you think of me sometimes, Nami, when I am no longer here? Oh! Tell me that you will remember me forever?" . . . And her mother's hand, almost rigid, caressed with a soft, gentle motion the curly little head that bowed pensively before her. . . . Then the slow caress was brusquely interrupted.

From that time on not a day had passed without Nami's thoughts turning, for a few moments at least, to the sad scene.

Twelve months after the day of the death there had arrived a step-mother, and what a change came over everything! Nami's mother had belonged to a highly esteemed family of the nobility; her slightest actions revealed dignity and gentility, and her servants affirmed that she was the best of mistresses and the most affectionate of mothers. Nami's step-mother also came of illustrious family and to finish her education she had been sent to England, whence she had returned filled with such an ardor for reform that her first concern, after entering the new household, was to change or abolish everything that recalled to Nami her late beloved mother. Before Nami's father she insisted upon expressing most decided opinions, upon matters

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of the utmost triviality as well as those of chief importance, and he would reply, in tones of mingled seriousness and irony, "Very well, very well, do as you please you know better than I" One day, however, drinking his *saké* together with his favorite orderly-officer, he said, pointing to his wife, "Namba, I advise you never to marry an educated woman. If you do, in a short time you'll be made to feel that you're ridiculously ignorant." At that very moment Namba was at a loss for reply, and he hid his confusion by playing with his glass, without winking an eye-lash. But he took the advice so much to heart that later he told his wife not to let their children go beyond the public schools.

Nami was of noble character and of keen intelligence. She was the favorite child of her father and she was always the last to whom he would say good-bye as she held out his hat for him, smiling in the arms of the nurse who would carry her to the end of the porch. The heart of a child is like a clod of earth in the springtime: even if it is trod upon or covered by a late snowfall, scarcely does the snow melt or the oppressor's foot pass on, when it begins to grow and flourish. Nami's grief at the death

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of her mother was rather deep for a child of eight, but no one doubted that the little bud would open and wax to full bloom as soon as the kind, life-giving rays of a warm sun should shine down upon it.

When Nami looked upon her step-mother for the first time she felt greatly intimidated before that woman, dressed in the European fashion, exhaling a strange perfume, and with a very wide mouth and excessively slanting eyes. Nevertheless, a little later the heart of the child would have been an easy conquest if the step-mother had known how to understand it, and had conquered her feeling of mistrust before the innocent little girl. But that woman, lacking all delicacy, egotistic, pedantic, and with manners hardly engaging, could not understand the simple, transparent soul of an eight-year-old child, and she acted toward her just as she would toward a grown-up girl. So that the little orphan was abandoned much to herself and grew up with the thought that the world is sad and cold. . . . Nami had a mother . . . and she could not love her; she had a little sister . . . and felt that she did not love her, either; Nami had a father it is true, and a most affectionate governess, old Iku; she had an

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aunt, too, the sister of her real mother. But, however great was the affection of the little child for these two women, it could not find free expansion, because the aunt lived far away and good Iku was after all a mere servant. Moreover, in regard to Iku the step-mother exercised the most careful surveillance, in order to repress any display of kindness or favoritism toward little Nami.

There remained her father . . . he, indeed, was all tenderness. But he, too, was held in subjection by the eagle eye of the mistress of the house, and at times, although much against his will, he had to side with her in rebuking the child. . . It is true that after such episodes he would dry her tears, secretly, with the tenderest caresses and the warmest words of paternal love. This struggle did not escape the sensitiveness and the intelligence of the little girl, and in her soul it gave rise to such a great feeling of love and gratitude toward her father that she would readily have faced any torture with the utmost courage in order to spare him any pain. The tokens of this deep affection for her father met with glances, and at times, words of disapprobation from the step-mother, who never brooked any intrusion in her domains.

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If the little girl, wounded, took refuge in a speechless, grieving passivity, she would be harshly reproved for her contrary obstinacy. Sometimes, as a result of some trifling offence, the step-mother would pour down upon the terrified child an avalanche of vulgar phrases gleaned from the expressive dialect of Chushu, directed with a native rapidity and volubility united to a logic imported from across the ocean; these words insulted Nami and often assailed the sacred memory of her mother. . . . Then the little heart would beat wildly,—her whole little body would quiver with rebellion, and there would rise to her lips words of hatred and scorn which she repressed with difficulty, restrained by the thought of her father . . . but the repressed outburst left in her soul a feeling of deep misery.

At other times, suffering under an unjust accusation, the child took refuge in her little hiding-place behind a curtain, and there she wept long and bitterly. . . . Did she really have a father? Yes, a father who loved her with all his heart, but at a tender age in which one's house is one's whole world an affectionate mother means more than five fathers. Under the tyranny of a step-mother such as Nami's

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even the gentlest character would have become embittered in less than ten years, and the most flourishing youth would have faded.

Viscount Kataoka used to say, "There's nothing childish about Nami. . . . She is so moody and contrary!"

There is no difference between the flowers that grow in a vase of humble terra-cotta and those placed in a jar of precious porcelain . . . all need alike the kisses of the sun. But Nami was a delicate floweret destined always to languish in the shade.

When Nami was betrothed to Takeo, and afterwards when the marriage ceremony had come to an end, a sigh escaped her lips,—the first sigh of true happiness. And her father, and her step-mother, her aunt, and Iku, too, all breathed more freely . . . each for a different reason.

The old governess often complained against her new mistress that, knowing well how to choose the most elegant and costly clothes for herself, she had furnished Nami with a modest outfit, in bad taste, and she wept to see with what parsimony the bride's dowry had been provided. Oh! The happy days when the

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house had been guided by a kind and provident hand!

Nami left the paternal roof with joy. . . . The thought of the new, free, happy life that awaited her overcame even the sadness of separation from the father she loved.

CHAPTER III

Fern Gathering

THE road that leads from Ikao to Mizusawa (called also Mizusawa-Kwannon because of the Buddhistic worship of the saint Kwannon) is about five kilometers long and winds upwards over a bare hill; only once does the landscape change, where the path leads through a narrow gorge, flanked by rocks, quickly to emerge again and resume the slow winding of its monotonous curves. The road is so well trodden and the way is so easy that a blind man could make the journey without a guide. As you proceed higher and higher your eye dominates the vast expanse of the valley of Jomo and from the summit of the hill a single glance embraces the whole view. To the right and the left of the road extend grassy fields. In the springtime, when the jonquils, fertilized by the ashes of the burned weeds, rise vigorously from the dark earth, and the clover and crow-foot and bell-flower grow thickly side by side, the fields seem to form an immense

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carpet with a background of velvety green, strewn with multicolored arabesques and a surface of thin leaves that have fallen from the downy, odorous, eatable ferns. A lover of natural beauty would find that a spring day spent among these grasses and flowers fled too soon, like a dream!

On a sunny afternoon Takeo and Nami, together with Iku and a servant girl, were gathering the tender ferns in these meadows. When they had grown tired from their long, aimless wandering, the girl spread the mat in a warm, shady spot, ideally adapted to the purpose. Takeo stretched himself out without ceremony; Nami took off her sandals, and brushing away with a little rose-colored handkerchief the dust that had gathered on her kimono, she sat down gracefully beside him, exclaiming, "What a delightful time! I could wish for no better!"

"Oh, madame, how beautiful you look today! It has been a long time since I've heard your song so sweet and merry!" said Iku, caressing her beloved mistress with a look that shone with devoted admiration.

"I've sung so much that my throat is dry!" replied Nami, with a soft laugh.

"I'm sorry I didn't bring along any tea,"

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apologized the servant girl, offering the bag filled with oranges, buns and *sushi*.¹

"The oranges will be enough," said Takeo, peeling the brightest of them. "Nami-san, I'll wager you couldn't open an orange as skillfully as this!"

"Do you think you're the only one that knows how?"

"Sir, among the ferns that you gathered there are a great deal of weeds," observed the servant girl timidly.

"Hush . . Hush . . ! Don't try to excuse your own fault by blaming the others," replied the baron jestingly. "What wonderful weather! I feel new life in my veins!"

"Just look at the sky. What a miraculous color! A piece of that blue mantle would make a stunning dress for a woman!" added Nami.

"And perhaps it would be even better for a sailor's uniform!"

"Just smell the perfumes that all the flowers about us are exhaling! Listen, Takeo . . . a lark is singing yonder . . ."

"I feel completely refreshed," said the governess. "Matsu, suppose we two go back to

¹ Boiled rice, seasoned with vinegar, fish and vegetables.

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fern gathering?" Iku and the servant walked off over the soft, grassy carpet.

"I hope you'll be kind enough to leave a few ferns for those who come after you," shouted Takeo to the retreating women. Then, turning to Nami, "How strong and lively Iku still is!"

"That's so, Takeo."

"Are you tired, my sweet little Nami-san?"

"I'll not tire today—it seems that I never felt so strong or so happy."

"When I'm out on the ocean I often see wonderful sights. But it seems to me that I've never beheld anything so enchanting as the panorama that unfolds itself before this hill. Don't you feel lighter, fresher, here? . . . Look at that valley shining in the sun, over there at the left. Can you make out Shibukawa, where we stopped for lunch? . . . And off in this other direction can you see something sparkling here and there like a long, blue serpent? That's the river Toné. Do you see it, Nami? . . . And yonder, following the slope of mount Akagi, there where it rises out of the mist, is the town of Mayebashi, nestling in the hills."

"And that silver ribbon that's waving along over there?"

"That's still the Toné. It's impossible to

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make out anything beyond that point. We should have brought along a field-glass, shouldn't we, Nami-san? But perhaps this landscape that dissolves in the distance is more beautiful as it is."

Nami placed her hand upon Takeo's knee and sighed, "How I should love to remain here forever with you!"

Two golden butterflies winged by, brushing Nami's flowing sleeve; then a footstep was heard, muffled by the thick grass, and suddenly a long shadow fell before the happy pair.

"Takeo-san!"

"Hello, Chijiwa-kun!"² replied the Baron with the happy familiar greeting. "What wind has blown you here? You're the last person I'd expect to meet in these parts."

Chijiwa was a young man of about twenty-six, in the uniform of a lieutenant. He was very handsome, and his face was not sun-burnt despite the nature of his duties. Yet there was something about him that destroyed the pleasing impression of his good looks. . . . Perhaps it was the sarcastic curl of his lips, or the dark glance of his deep black eyes. He was a cousin

² 'Kun.' Equivalent to Mr., and used more familiarly by men instead of 'San.'

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to Takeo, and although his official grade was low, he was considered one of the most intelligent officers of the Headquarters Staff.

"You're surprised to see me here, aren't you? I came to Takasaki yesterday on business and spent the night there. This morning I went to Shibukawa where I learned that Ikao was very near. I went to the inn to look for you and they told me that you had gone in this direction to gather ferns. And here I am. Tomorrow I return. I'm not in the way, am I?"

"Not at all. Did you see my mother?"

"Yes, yesterday morning. She's well and is extremely impatient for your return." Then, with a sparkling glance at Nami, he added, "Your parents at Akasaka are also well."

Nami's cheeks had colored from the very moment at which the young man had arrived, but at these words they turned fiery red, and she lowered her eyes.

"Reinforcements have arrived!" cried Takeo, laughing. "Now I fear no attack. Hurrah for the union of the land and naval forces! We could put millions of Amazons to flight now! And to think that these two women,"—pointing to Iku and the servant girl who were approaching,—“dared to accuse me while I was alone . . .

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and said that I had picked weeds instead of ferns!"

The old woman, at sight of Chijiwa, wrinkled her brow, exclaiming, "What a surprise to find you here!"

It was Takeo who replied.

"I telegraphed to him a little while ago, asking for reinforcements."

"The baron is joking. Or is it so?"

"He returns tomorrow," said Nami, in a low voice.

"I believe, Baron, that it's time to go back and prepare dinner."

"You're right, Iku. Please note that Chijiwa is dining with us, and that we must give him a fine reception. And for the rest, we all have an excellent appetite. . . . How's this, Nami-san? You, too, leaving us? Perhaps you're abandoning us for your allies? . . . Stay, stay, we'll concede you a generous truce."

Nami stopped, without replying, while Iku and the girl walked off, carrying the bunches of ferns.

The three who remained behind began to pluck other plants and lingered about, wandering off toward Misuzawa-no-Kwannon before descending the hill and taking the road back.

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The sun, which was about to set behind mount Monokoki, covered a broad expanse of the heavens with its resplendent rays. The grasses, to the right and left of the path, seemed to form two flaming hedges; here and there a solitary pine stretched its long shadow across the luminous slope. The hilltops were immersed in a fiery bath and in the valley could be seen bannerets of smoke curling up from the huts, that stood lonely, or in groups, in the quiet villages. A peasant was goading his oxen toward the valley; his loud shout and the mooing of the animals were the only sounds that broke the deep silence, waking a lingering echo in the tranquil atmosphere.

Takeo and Chijiwa walked along side by side; Nami followed them. They descended the hill slowly, crossed the narrow valley and then climbed upward again to reach the path that was still illuminated by the last rays of the sun.

Suddenly Takeo stopped, exclaiming, "Ah! How stupid of me! I've lost my cane. I surely must have left it where we rested for a few moments before going down into the valley. Wait here for me, please. I'll run and be back directly."

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"Takeo, please, let me go along with you," begged Nami.

"No, no, my child! You'd better wait for me. I'll run both ways and in two minutes I'll be here again."

Takeo prevailed upon her to remain and after having dropped his bunch of ferns to the ground he ran off across the hill.

Takeo's figure receded and Nami remained standing several paces away from Chijiwa. For a few moments Takeo could be discerned in the distance, making his way to the top of the hill, then he disappeared behind a turn in the road.

"Nami-ko-san!"

Nami, who was gazing across the hills, shuddered upon hearing herself addressed so familiarly.

"Nami-ko-san," repeated Chijiwa, coming closer while Nami retreated. She raised her glance to Chijiwa's face, but lowered it at once to escape the wily, ironic glitter of his black eyes.

"My congratulations!"

Nami did not breathe and her cheeks turned a deep red.

"My congratulations! You must be very

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happy. . . .” Then, in a voice that echoed with mockery, “But you must know that there’s one man who can’t be happy!”

Nami maintained her silence, her gaze directed to the ground, digging the earth with the point of her parasol.

“Nami-ko-san!”

Like a young squirrel, at bay before the pursuit of a snake, she raised her eyes courageously and met the enemy’s insistent glance with a look full of dignity and strength.

“Well?”

“A baron’s title lots of money. Indeed, not at all bad! Once more, my sincerest congratulations!”

“What is the meaning of all this?”

“It means that to marry a rich nobleman, even if he’s a fool, and to despise a sincere lover because he’s poor is now the rule among young ladies of high society. . . . You, naturally, are an exception!”

Nami’s genteel face was covered anew by a deep red and assumed an expression of disdain, while her angry glance rested upon Chijiwa.

“I beg you to cease these silly insinuations or else to repeat them before Takeo Coward! To write me a letter such as you had

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the impudence to address to me, without speaking to my father! I am tired of this persecution. . . ."

"What?"

Chijiwa's look became more sinister, he bit his lips and approached Nami. Suddenly there was heard the heavy trot of a horse and the countryman who was mounted on it shouted as he sped by, "Good evening!" He took off his hat and then turned around, as he rode off astonished not to know the young couple.

Chijiwa, meanwhile, had remained rooted to the spot, then the rigidity of his features relaxed somewhat and gave way to a sarcastic laugh.

"Very well. Give it back to me if you don't care to keep it."

"Give back what?"

"What you just mentioned . . . the letter that you hate."

"I no longer have it."

"Where is it, then?"

"I threw it into the fire . . . the nasty sheet . . ."

"Are you sure? Nobody read it?"

"Nobody, of course."

"Really?"

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“Enough. Don’t say any more to me. . . . I’ll speak nothing further.”

Nami’s angry glare met the evil, impudent gleam of Chijiwa’s black eyes; a shudder rippled over her body and she turned away her glance. At this juncture Takeo came running down the hill, which was still illuminated by the reflection of the fiery western sky. Nami breathed a sigh of relief.

“Nami-ko-san!”

Chijiwa tried determinately to fix his glance upon Nami, but her eyes evaded his look with equal determination.

“Nami-ko-san, one word more and I’ll leave you. Keep silent . . . don’t reveal my secret to Takeo or to your parents. If you do, you’ll have reason to repent!” As he ended these cowardly words Chijiwa walked away several steps and came to a stop, plucking several wild flowers.

Takeo came running up to them. “Did I keep you waiting long?” he asked, panting heavily. “I’m all out of breath . . . I ran the whole way . . . I found my cane just where I thought I left it . . . Nami-san, what’s the matter? Don’t you feel well?”

Chijiwa, placing the flowers he had plucked

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into his buttonhole, answered, "So much time passed since you left us that she thought you had lost your way back." And he laughed.

Takeo joined in the laugh, exclaiming, "Well, well! And now, homeward bound!"

The three shadows, now silent, walked slowly side by side along the road to Ikao.

CHAPTER IV

The Yamaki Household

IN the train that left Takasaki at three o'clock in the afternoon a traveler, alone in a compartment of the second class, is stretched out upon his seat, smoking and reading a paper. It is Yasuhiko Chijiwa.

Suddenly, with a gesture of impatience, he casts aside the newspaper. "Confound it!" Angrily he tramples upon the cigarette that has fallen from his lips, stops a moment to look through the window, as if he hesitates to be thrust upon his own thoughts paces up and down the compartment mechanically, and at last returns to his original position, this time crossing his arms on his chest and closing his eyes. His black eyebrows contract with the intensity of his thoughts into a straight line.

Yasuhiko Chijiwa was an orphan. His father, a Samurai¹ of the illustrious Kagoshima clan (who received their title from the principality

¹ Samurai.' Up to the War of Restoration (1868), a member of the military class.

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of the same name, now a province in the south-west of Japan) had died fighting in the great War of Restoration. His mother, the victim of an epidemic, had left Chijiwa alone when he was only six. He was taken and educated by a maternal aunt, the mother of Takeo Kawashima. She was kind to the little orphan, but his uncle was not so well disposed toward him. On holidays Takeo would wear a rich suit of silk and would occupy a prominent post, while Yasuhiko, dressed more modestly, would attract no attention and be abandoned to himself. So that very soon he was forced to realize the sadness of his condition. Takeo had parents, wealth and high official standing; he, on the contrary, was alone and would have to provide for his future with his brawn or brain. And in his heart envy of Takeo and hatred toward Takeo's father grew apace.

Chijiwa soon learned that there were two ways of achieving success in the world: one wide and one narrow, and early he decided to follow the easiest way. Thus, when his uncle sent him to military school he looked with a feeling of pity upon those of his companions who studied and worked hard to make a good showing at the examinations and in the con-

tests, and he preferred to employ his time cultivating the friendship of the influential people of his province, cunningly choosing those who could be of use to him in the future. This plan revealed its efficacy from the very beginning of his career, for, while his schoolmates were slowly advancing from one grade to another he was soon called to a place upon the Headquarters Staff, and from this enviable position, which uncovered to him many of the secrets of the military organization, he looked complacently down upon his fellow students as they led the regiments of infantry or the laborious maneuvers of the troops.

His most important problem was that of marriage; he was certain that only through alliance with some noted family could success be won, just as through the joining of their limbs monkeys succeed in reaching the water that quenches their thirst. Chijiwa then began to explore the field of battle and discovered that the daughter of marquis so-and-so was going to marry baron X, that the first-born daughter of count Y was scheduled to marry a certain other high official, and that this other millionairess was to become princess Z. His hunter's eye finally singled out the house of General

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Kataoka who, though retired, was still held in universal esteem and was a welcome personage at the Court. Chijiwa at once realized the importance of that veiled but powerful influence, and he employed the slightest pretext to visit the Kataoka home and especially to make himself agreeable to the elder daughter, Nami, whom he had selected because she seemed to be the general's favorite. Her step-mother, indeed, would gladly have embraced the first opportunity to marry her off and thus remove her from the paternal roof. Nor did his choice lack a certain sentiment of sympathy for that girl of noble and generous impulses, of gracious and individual countenance.

He waited for a propitious occasion, seeking in the meantime to discover what sort of impression he had made upon the general, who was hardly given to revealing his thoughts. Very soon, on the other hand, he had learned that he had won the favor of Madame Kataoka. So, too, he had become quite friendly with fifteen-year old Koma, developed beyond her years. There were also in the family two children born of the second wife, but Chijiwa naturally paid little attention to these. There was one other person: old Iku, the only one

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of the former servants to have remained by express will of the general, after the death of Nami's mother. The good old woman was always at Nami's side, and Chijiwa had not been able to win her sympathies. This disconcerted him somewhat, but he was cheered by the thought that he would turn all his arts directly to the conquest of the girl herself. For a year he watched for a favorable opportunity, and then, in a moment of impatience, he had written a declaration of love, had sealed it in a double envelope, had had a woman friend write the address for him and had sent it by mail to Nami.

On that same day he had been obliged to leave for service and upon his return, after three months, he learned with intense stupefaction that through the offices of Viscount Kato, royal minister, Nami had been married to her cousin, Takeo Kawashima. Upon hearing this unexpected news Chijiwa was seized with rage and tore to tatters a beautiful crape veil that he had brought as a gift for Nami in the hope that its festive color would be a good augury for his success.

But Chijiwa was not the man to allow himself to be discouraged by a delusion of love, and indeed, at once he recovered his innate dar-

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ing. One fear remained,—that Nami, revealing to her father or her husband the secret of his love letter, should do him irreparable harm by depriving him of a powerful friend. And because he was very prudent he thought it useful to investigate Nami's feelings toward him; this is why, during his journey to Takasaki, he made the trip to Ikao to find the young couple there and cunningly survey the situation. Now, as he returned, a single feeling dominated his soul to the exclusion of every other: this was intense hatred of Takeo.

Suddenly it seemed to Chijiwa that a voice nearby was crying "Takeo! Takeo!" and at the sound of these syllables he awoke with a start from his meditations. He went to the window and noticed that the train had stopped at a station, while the guard was shouting "Ageo! Ageo!"

"Damn him!" he cursed, going back to his place with a snarl of scorn at his childish illusion, tossing his shoulders as if to chase away an unwelcome thought.

Then his countenance reassumed its original expression of hatred, while he bit his lips madly.

The train, after having left Ageo and passed

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several other stations with the rapidity of the wind, arrived at Oji. Several persons entered the compartment in which Chijiwa sat, among them a man in the fifties, with a swarthy face, slanting eyes that looked downwards and a red mole as large as a pea under his left eye. He wore a costly garment; from his white crape belt hung a heavy gold chain and upon his left hand sparkled a huge diamond set in a massive circle of gold.

As the traveler sought his seat his gaze encountered that of Chijiwa.

"Oh, Chijiwa-san! . . . Well, how do you do? Where are you coming from?"

As he spoke, the man with the mole sat down beside the officer.

"I'm coming from Takasaki."

"From Takasaki?" The man looked Chijiwa full in the face with a long, inquiring glance, and then added, in a low voice, "Are you in a great hurry? If not, I'll invite you to have supper with me."

Chijiwa accepted with a simple nod.

Near the bridge leading to the little village of Hashiba, on the banks of the river, there was a house over whose entrance the inscription "Villa Yamaki" served to dispel the sup-

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position that the structure was a modern nest of pleasure.

In a room of the second story whose thin paper windows seemed to have been made to reflect the profile of the fantastic *shimada* waving to the cadence of wanton music, and whose mats seemed to ask for a bright red carpet to receive the playing cards, there sat side by side at the table covered with a confusion of dishes and cups, Chijiwa and the man with the mole, Hyozo Yamaki. The pale light from a lamp that was covered with a colored shade cast sufficient light over the room, perhaps better than the blinding brilliance of electricity.

No servant girl had been assigned to serve the meal, and not without reason. Before the man with the mole lay a note-book, upon which a pencil placed between the leaves kept the pages open at a place where could be noticed a list of names, titles, the addresses of many persons, each marked with a conventional symbol, such as a circle, a square, a triangle, number, letter and the like; several names had been crossed out and replaced by various others.

“Then we understand each other, Chijiwa.

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But I want you to let me know the moment everything is in readiness. . . . Are you sure of success?"

"Almost certain. The affair is already in the hands of the minister. But, since rivals are pressing us, it'll be better to be lavish with money." Then, placing his index finger upon one of the names in the note-book, he added, "This fellow is a scoundrel. You'll do well to shut him up."

"And what do you think of this one?"

"He isn't worth a straw. I don't know him very well, but they say that he's very scrupulous. I believe it will be better to get the lay of the land directly, and if we find resistance we'll have to proceed cautiously."

"It's true that while you may find many persons in the army with whom it's easy to come to an understanding there are some of whom you may say the very opposite. Do you recall how last year we succeeded in supplying a regiment with the uniforms they needed, and how smoothly everything was going, when a colonel came along, I can't remember his name, — that fellow with the red mustache. . . . Well, he was more than a trifle troublesome, pretending to discover defects in our goods. And

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when our agent sent him the customary box containing the traditional sweets and cakes he proudly declared that he wasn't the man to let himself be used as a tool and that it was unworthy of a soldier to receive gifts. . . . Imagine the scene when in his anger he threw the box at the commissioner's feet and out of it came rolling over the floor the silver coins hidden under a layer of golden cake! Just picture that shining mixture of sparkling coins and red-orange pastry! We were certainly caught in a trap! That fine fellow fell into a fury and swore that he had never in his life seen so infamous an affair. . . . It was no easy task to persuade him not to expose us! As a result we afterwards went through some terrible moments. . . . And while we're on the subject of this kind of people, let's not forget Takeo. . . . It's absolutely impossible to arrive at an understanding with him. Why, only recently. . . ."

"You're right. . . . But Takeo inherited enough money to permit him to indulge all his desires, and under such circumstances it's not so hard to hold yourself as proud and as straight as a bar of steel! As for myself, poor and without prospects of a fortune. . . ."

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"Oh! I quite forgot," interrupted the man with the mole, looking fixedly at Chijiwa. Then he took out and counted rapidly ten five-yen banknotes. "Take this for the present, merely as your traveling expenses. The real pay will come in due time."

"Thanks. I take it without ceremony." And he placed the money at once in his pocket. "But, — Yamaki-san. . . ."

"Well?"

"The proverb says, 'He who does not sow, neither shall he reap.' "

Yamaki smiled broadly, and playfully tapping Chijiwa's cheek he murmured, "You're an intelligent fellow! Too bad you're not the Chief of Commissariat."

Chijiwa's lips parted in an ironic smile.

"Yamaki, you know that the shortest dagger in the hands of our hero Kiyomasa,² was more efficacious than any three-foot three-inch sword in the hands of a novice!"

"That's so. I advise you, nevertheless, to proceed with caution in this sort of speculation. A beginner can easily meet his ruin."

"I know, I know. . . . Only those succeed

² 'Kiyomasa' (1562-1611). Celebrated soldier who took part in the expedition against Korea.

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who have plenty of money to pass out to others. . . . Well, I must be going now. I'll return in a few days as soon as I've picked up any information. . . . No, don't call a carriage. I'd rather take a *kuruma*."

"As you wish. I beg you to excuse my wife. She was unable to join us because she is needed by my daughter."

"Is O-Toyo-san ill? I'm sorry."

"Yes, she's been ill for a month. My wife wanted to take her to the country. Take my advice, Chijiwa. Don't be in a hurry to marry and raise a family. There's nothing better than a bachelor's life if you want to make money!"

Chijiwa took his leave at the threshold of the porch and walked off rapidly, while Yamaki went back to the room he had just left. The door opened noiselessly and a woman came in, taking a seat beside Yamaki. She was no longer very young but the complexion of her face seemed rather fresh under her thin hair; two of her teeth projected slightly from her mouth.

"Has Chijiwa-san left?"

"Just now. How is O-Toyo?"

The woman answered in a grave voice.

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"I don't know what else to do for her. Kane," she said, turning to the servant girl who was arranging the dishes, "leave us alone for a moment . . . Imagine, only today O-Toyo smashed a cup, tore one of her gowns to shreds and for the most trivial reasons she flies into a terrible passion! And she's scarcely eighteen!"

"I'm afraid we'll be forced to send her to the Sugamo insane asylum. Poor girl!"

"This is no time for jesting. I pity her with all my heart. This very day she was saying to Také, 'That ungrateful wretch Takeo! The cruel monster! At New Year's I sent him a pair of slippers embroidered by my own hands and a little handkerchief embroidered with flowers, and gloves . . . and other nick-nacks. And last year didn't I send him a beautiful shirt of red wool? All of them bought with my savings. And the ingrate, without even letting me know a thing, went and married that ugly, repulsive, haughty Nami-ko. The traitor! And I am the daughter of Yamaki! Why should he thrust me aside for a thing like Nami-ko-san? The ill-bred monster!' And she wept with scalding tears. Really, dear, can noth-

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ing be done for her? She is so wildly in love with him!"

"Nonsense! 'Like mother, like daughter,' says the proverb, and upon my word, you are a worthy mother of this capricious girl. Let me tell you that Kawashima has been made a noble recently, that he has a large patrimony, and above all that he's not a fool. As far as I'm concerned I've done everything in my power to marry off O-Toyo, but it's of no use. Now he is married, and that door is closed. Unless Nami dies or is divorced there's no more hope. Meanwhile please cease your useless complaining and hunt out an even better match. You're a gifted woman, aren't you?"

"You speak sheer nonsense. I'm not so brave or clever as you you, who at fifty still like those distractions that should be left to youngsters!"

"I'm in no mood to put up with your outbreaks. It seems to me that you often talk beside the point and excite yourself over trifles. . . . You know that I love O-Toyo just as much as you do she is my daughter. Only, instead of wasting my time in lamenting over the past or in imagining impossible things, I believe it best to work for her future happi-

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ness. Come, O-Sumi, let's go in to her and try to take her mind away from her thoughts."

And they both walked off through a long corridor to O-Toyo's room.

Hyozo Yamaki was of humble origin, but he was considered a most skillful business man. At the beginning of Yamaki's career Takeo's father had shown very good will toward him, and for this reason he still remained grateful toward Takeo's family; this feeling was moreover strengthened by the consideration that the Kawashima family was one of the richest and most highly regarded of the new nobility. But perhaps this judgment is too unjust.

Yamaki lived in Shiba, one of the most beautiful sections of Tokyo, in the neighborhood of the Imperial Palace, and possessed in addition a country residence near Hashiba. At first he had engaged in an enterprise strongly resembling usury, but now he was busy exclusively with contracts for army and government supplies. His only son was at the time in America, gaining business experience, and his daughter O-Toyo had shortly before left the Peeress Institute, which was attended by the daughters of the most distinguished families. As for his wife, nobody had ever

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succeeded in learning how or when he had married her, and information about her was confined to the fact that she came from Kyoto. She was a simple, domestic woman,—so much so that many wondered how Yamaki had taken a liking to her. Of course he had a few lady friends whom he was privileged to call “charming,” “amiable” and so on, and who constantly awaited his visits. His wife was not at all ignorant of this.

In the alcove were a harp and a mandolin, placed beside a glass case containing a large doll. In a corner stood a magnificent inlaid dressing table against the wall, facing a cheval glass. The entire room was so richly furnished that one would have easily imagined it belonged to the wife of a Croesus, and one’s eye naturally turned toward the silk-covered bed to seek there the queen of so elegant a realm.

Upon the bed lay a girl of seventeen impatiently gathering around her neck the thick hair that surrounded her rosy face and chubby cheeks. Her lips were half open as if she were too fatigued to keep them closed and her eyes, under the thin eyebrows, appeared swollen, as

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if veiled by a thin cloud, in the awakening from a sleep tormented by dreams.

“Silly goose!” she screamed at her maid, who at that moment was leaving the room to execute one of her mistress’s orders, smiling in spite of herself at the capriciousness of O-Toyo’s desires.

The young girl, left alone, threw aside the cover with a swift, nervous gesture, jumped to the floor, seized a photograph that lay with others in a corner of the alcove, looked with sarcastic smile at the group of uniformed schoolgirls that it represented, quickly pointed her finger at one of these with a scornful titter, and the better to show her antipathy repeatedly scratched the face of her rival with her little pink nails.

At this very moment the door opened.

“Who it is? You, Také?”

“Yes, it’s Také a rather bald Také!” replied Yamaki with a laugh, and he sat down near the bed, while the mother took her post at the other side. The girl tried to hide the photograph by bending over upon it.

“How are you, O-Toyo? Better? What are you doing? Let’s see. Let’s see, I tell you! Ah! Nami-ko-san’s picture! You’ve scratched

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it up beautifully! It would be a thousand times better to recite conjurations in a chapel at midnight, rather than take revenge in so harmless and silly a manner!"

"Yamaki, don't put any abominable notions into her head!" exclaimed his wife with an indignant glance.

"O-Toyo, are you or are you not the daughter of Hyozo Yamaki? Show how brave you are and think rather of your happiness instead of remaining faithful to that proud fellow who doesn't return your love. My dear child, try to win the son of some millionaire, like Mitsui or Mitsubishi, or the son of a marshal or a minister or the like. . . . Or better still, some foreign prince. How can you be so foolish?"

Her Excellency, Lady O-Toyo, who assumed an air of great authority and violence when she was alone with her mother, and screamed and wept without restraint, was always intimidated by the presence of her father; now, too, she was abashed and speechless.

"You don't answer me, my little girl? Can't you really forget Takeo-san? You love him so much, even now? . . . Listen, O-Toyo, would you like to go to Kyoto for a little holiday? It's such a diverting trip. There are so many sights

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to take in, and from there we can go to Nishijin and in one of the great silk shops you could buy something nice,—an elegant *obi* or a *samnaigasame*. Will you come? You won't refuse me, will you? O-Sumi," he continued, turning to his wife, "you haven't been to Kyoto for some time. You could go along with O-Toyo."

"What? Won't you accompany us?"

"I? Do you imagine. . . . Don't you see how much business I have on my hands?"

"Then I'll not go, either."

"What do you call this? Do you mean to disobey me?"

"Ah! Ah!"

"What is it?"

"Ah! Ah! Ah!"

"Stop that! I don't want you to laugh so. Tell me at once why you don't want to go?"

"Because I can't leave you behind without someone to keep an eye on you."

"Fie! How dare you utter such nonsense before your daughter! O-Toyo, don't believe a word your mother says. . . . Don't even listen."

"Come, now. Don't play the hypocrite with me," added O-Sumi.

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“Better not get me angry. . . . Come, O-Toyo, my dear little girl. Don’t worry; cheer up and be brave. You’ll see that everything will turn out right. . . .”

CHAPTER V

At the General's Home

ON a Saturday afternoon toward the middle of June, while the chestnut trees fronting a beautiful house in the Akasaka quarter of Tokyo open their blossoms to the warm rays of the sun, Viscount-General Kataoma is comfortably seated in his study. He is about fifty; the top of his head is bald, and his hair is beginning to turn gray, while his corpulence is such that the strongest steed would dissolve in perspiration under his weight; his flabby neck almost disappears between his two square shoulders and his double chin grazes the top of his chest. The face of this massive gentleman is bronzed by the sun, his lips are red and fleshy, his beard is sparse, his eyebrows thin. Only his eyes contrast with the other parts of his person, for they are small and narrow, like those of an elephant, and shine with an expression of great kindness that harmonizes with the perpetual smile of the lips and helps endow his features with a gently humoristic appearance.

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Several years before, while he was on a hunting trip in a mountainous region he had happened, in seeking refreshments, to knock at the door of a solitary cabin inhabited by a woman who lived alone. He was in civil dress and the old woman, after having scrutinized him with glances that expressed a keen admiration, exclaimed, "How stout you are! I'll wager you've killed any amount of game!"

He replied with his indulgent, kindly smile.

"No, almost nothing!"

"It's impossible to get all the food you need by hunting. Listen to my advice. Get a laborer's job and I'll bet that with your strong, robust appearance, they'll offer you as high as fifty yen without a murmur. . . ."

"Per month?"

"No no! Per year, of course. Think it over, and if you should decide to do so, come to me, for I'll give you work and good wages."

"Very well. . . . Who knows? It may well happen that some day or other I'll come back and consider your offer."

"Do so, yes. Feel free to do so. It's really a shame, with all your strength, to waste time hunting!"

This comical incident was one of the anec-

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dotes that he repeated most often and with most pleasure. Indeed, whoever did not know him would have carried away at first sight an impression very similar to that formed by the old woman. But to those who knew him this energetic soldier represented a shining tower of manly strength, and in times of uncertainty and anxiety everybody reposed the same confidence in him as would have been placed by a besieged town in a solid wall of steel. His massive body, which dominated the crowd like a little hill, his calm mind that could think rapidly and clearly, so inspired the courage of his soldiers that not one of them, at his side, would ever tremble in face of the greatest dangers.

In the general's room, on the table near the arm-chair, stood a little blue pot in which grew, straight and slender, twin bamboo plants. On the front wall hung the pictures of the Emperor and the Empress, and below them fixed to the wall were two autograph letters of the famous statesman and marshal, Nanshu; one of these read "Be kind to one another!" There was also a bookcase with several rows of books; on the mantle over the fireplace and on a triangular little table were arranged pho-

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tographs of Japanese and foreigners, many of whom were in military uniform.

The bright green curtains had been drawn aside and the six windows facing the east and the south were wide open; one's gaze, soaring above Tanimaki street, thronged with people, rested upon the leafy slope of the Reinan hill, crowned with the steep tower of Atago, around which a kite was circling in slowly ascending spirals. Towards the south appeared a garden shaded by chestnut trees in full bloom, and in one part of the chestnut grove rose erect a tall poplar from the sacred precincts of Hikawa, straight and majestic as a silver lance.

The beautiful sky of early summer, beheld in large squares through the windows, seemed like an elegant texture of cerulean silk. Here and there, through the leaves whose green was still pale, rose in luxuriant growth the chestnut blossoms, the highest of them clearly outlined against the luminous background of the heavens. One flourishing branch had reached to the top of the wall and was advancing into the room; it was straight and thick, but elegantly adorned with garlanded tufts and its leaves, filtering the light of the sun, refracted it in beams that

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shone like emeralds, sapphires and golden amber.

A gentle breath of breeze scattered the perfume of the blossoms through the room, while the shadows of the swaying leaves danced a jig upon the pages of *The Present Status of the Siberian Railroad*, which the general held in his left hand. For an instant he closed his small eyes, breathing deeply, then he opened them again, slowly bringing his gaze to the open book. From afar came a noise like the grating of a pulley, and when this had died away the deep quiet of noon enveloped the entire house. Then suddenly appeared two little rascals that seemed to have awaited, in ambush, the most propitious moment for breaking into the house. Timidly they thrust their heads through the door, which was slightly ajar, and at once drew them back. The sound of their suffocated laughter could be heard. One of these was a boy of about eight, dressed like a sailor, the other was a little girl that seemed two or three years younger than her companion; she wore her hair loose and the folds of her rose-striped garment were clasped by a purple-red girdle.

The two little rogues hesitated several

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moments, and then, as if the wait was too long, pushed the door wide open, rushed into the room, and gracefully clearing a pile of newspapers made a direct assault upon the general's easy-chair, together embracing his knees, the sailor at the right and the little curly-head at the left.

"Papa!"

"Oh! So here you are again, rascals?" asked the general in his deep voice, smiling, while his heavy hands caressed the shoulders of the little naval officer and the curly head of the girl. "And how did it go with your examinations?"

"Papa, I got 'Excellent' in arithmetic."

"Daddy, first listen to me. The teacher said that my embroidery was excellent. Look." And the tot took from her basket the sample of her handiwork and spread it out across the general's knees.

"Oh! Oh! Really that's beautiful!"

"And I got 'Good' in reading and writing and 'Fair' in everything else. But just as I was coming out of school Minamaki hit me, and she was my best friend, and now I feel so unhappy. . . ."

"My dear little girlie! May that be the greatest misfortune you'll ever know! . . . And

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my sailor laddie! What stories did you read today?"

"The story of Masatsura.¹ Tell me, when you were a boy, did you and your schoolmates love Masatsura as much as we do? If you only knew how we love him! Papa, who was greater, Masatsura or Napoleon?"

"They were both great men. . . ."

"Papa, I like Masatsura, but I prefer the navy. You in the army, I in the navy. . . . How fine!"

The general laughed at his words.

"So you're going to be a sailor like Takeo-san. . . .?"

"Oh, no! Takeo-san is only an ensign. I want to be a general."

"In the navy we say admiral. . . . What? Have you lost your desire to become an admiral?"

"You're a general, pa. But a general is greater than an ensign, isn't he?"

"Ensign or general, the one who works the hardest will reach highest."

"Papa, listen, papa dear!" exclaimed the curly head, jumping upon her father's knee.

¹ Masatsura (1326-1348). Eldest son of the hero Masashige-Kusonoki, in his struggle against the Ashikaga he was defeated and perished together with all his men.

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“The teacher told us such a pretty story—the story of the hare and the tortoise. Shall I tell it to you? . . . There was once upon a time a hare and a tortoise who. . . Ah! Here’s mamma!”

At this moment the two children darted toward the door, through which entered a woman in the forties, of slender figure, her hair dressed in European fashion and parted in the front; her large eyes, which slanted slightly, shone with a keenly sarcastic expression; her face, of rather dark complexion, was covered with a very fine layer of rice powder and her teeth, which she took care to show while she spoke, were beautifully chiselled and shiningly white. She wore a costly garment of crape, encircled by a silk girdle, and many precious stones sparkled on her fingers.

“Here you are, still hanging around your father’s neck!”

“No. It was I who was asking about their school work.”

“But now it’s time for papa himself to take his English lesson. Run off, now, like good little children, and play outside till I come out to take you for a nice walk.”

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"Isn't that lovely!" cried the curly-head, clapping her little hands.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" shouted the sailor.

And taking each other by the hand they hopped out of the room. For a time the glad shouting of the sailor could be heard, and also a voice, imploring, "Let me go, Ki-chan!" Then the childish prattle was lost in the distance.

"You may say what you please, but you are too indulgent toward your children."

The general, at this reproof, replied, smiling, "I don't think so. Children get along much better when they feel that they're loved."

"But, my dear, you know that the popular saying couples a severe father with a compassionate mother. If you persist in spoiling them in this way the proverb will have to be reversed and it will behoove me alone to correct them. And in that manner I'll become hateful to them. . . ."

"There, there. . . . Don't scold me, and be a little indulgent yourself. And now, Madame Professor, make yourself comfortable, I pray."

The general took from his book-case an English primer, *The Royal Third Reader*, and began to read, pronouncing the words slowly

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without abandoning the characteristic inflection of the dialect of Satsuma, a province in southern Japan, where he had been born.

The woman listened attentively and from time to time corrected some error.

The general received this lesson every day. His high position was the reward of valor shown in the battles that had taken place during the War of Restoration in 1868, so that he soon found himself occupying an office that left him little time for the study of foreign languages. For a few years he had now been in an auxiliary position, and soon had found sufficient leisure to give to the learning of English, taking as instructor his wife, who, through the desire of her father (descendant of a noble family of Choshu) had been many years in England for the purposes of a thorough education. She returned knowing more about the English language, perhaps, than any one in Japan. Her mind had become so impregnated with the ideas of the Far West that it seemed the most natural thing in the world for her to regulate and supervise the entire affairs of the household, according to foreign custom. Unfortunately, however, circumstances and force of habit often contended with her reformatory desires, and

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more than once the servants of the house found it difficult to restrain a smile of pity for what they called her inexperience, and the children, when they were not playing with their father, whom they adored, would upset the mother entirely with their noisy games and tiresome complaints. All this, constantly looked upon with the utmost oriental indifference by the general, who did not concern himself at all with the matters of trifling import that daily took place about him, finally embittered the character of Madame Shige-ko.

Meanwhile the general, not without having encountered more than one difficulty, had reached the end of the page and was already translating the first sentences when the door opened, making way for a graceful girl of about fifteen years, who wore her hair loose, tied with a bright red ribbon. The young girl could not control a smile upon seeing her father reading as diligently as a pupil from a small book that was almost hidden by his large hands.

“Mamma, Aunt Kato is in the sitting-room.”

The woman did not move, waiting for a sign from the general; her eyebrows, however, were contracted into a slight wrinkle.

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The general arose at once and said, moving a chair close to his own, "Ask her to come in."

"Good day," he smilingly greeted the woman of pleasant mien who came into the room.

She seemed to be about forty-five and wore thick glasses because of her weak eyesight. Upon her face could be detected a slight resemblance to Nami-san, which was quite natural, as she was the sister of General Kataoka's first wife. She was the wife of Viscount Kato, member of the Senate, and her husband, aided by her, had been the intermediary in the marriage of Nami to Takeo.

The general brought the chair forward for her, smiling, and lowered the curtain before her, saying, "It's a long time since I've seen you. . . . Is your husband still very busy?"

"Indeed, he's far more diligent than the gardeners and spends the whole day with the shears in his hands. It's still too early for the gladioli, but our pomegranates, of which he's so proud, are beginning to blossom. . . . And the roses are in full bloom! You'll come to see them, won't you? My husband told me expressly to invite you."

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And turning to Madame Kataoka, she added, "Bring Ki-chan and Mi-chan along, do."

In truth, the general's wife was not especially fond of Madame Kato. The difference in culture and character constituted in itself an obstacle to the birth of any sympathetic understanding between the two women. Moreover, the consideration that this woman was the sister of the general's first wife came too frequently to the mind of the general's second wife, and caused her no little uneasiness, although she could not quite understand why. Perhaps it was because her domineering character could not support any outside interference whatsoever in the heart as in the home of the general, over whom she alone desired to wield the scepter. The sister of his first wife, who not only evoked in the general's mind the figure of the dead woman, but also, with her deep affection for Nami and her sympathy for Iku awoke all the memories of the past, seemed to contest the supremacy of the second wife, keeping alive the memory of her who was no more, and this thought was insupportable to Madame Shiga. Now, however, that Nami and Iku had gone, it seemed that the hostile coalition had been dissolved, but whenever

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Madame Kato appeared the other woman felt her antipathy return, as if the first wife in person had come back to struggle with her and reassume her authority as ruler of the household, renewing former customs now abolished or changed according to a thoroughly, accurately pre-established plan of reform.

Madame Kato took from her bag a box of candies and placed it upon the table, saying, "With my greetings to Ki-chan and Mi-chan. Isn't school over yet? . . . I don't see them. . . . And here's something for you,—a little token of my affection," she added, offering to the girl in the red ribbon, who was just coming in with the cups of tea, a pin adorned with an artificial flower.

"Thanks, auntie, and for the children, too. . . . They'll be so happy!"

At this moment a servant announced that a man with the insignia of the Red Cross asked for Madame Shiga; she excused herself and walked out quickly, not without having first made a sign to the girl and whispered something to her; the girl at once concealed herself behind a window curtain, ready to overhear the talk between her aunt and her father.

Koma, although a daughter of the general's

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first wife, was a great favorite with her step-mother, who, on the other hand, hated Nami, because her silent and reserved character made her appear obstinate and contrary, while the younger sister was quick and vivacious, more like Madame Shiga herself. Besides this she liked to show a preference for Koma, like a good step-mother, as if thereby to compensate the little girl for the caresses which her father showered in greater profusion upon his first-born favorite. Egotistic, stubborn persons always act from selfish motives, without regard to others. But there is a weak side to their character, for they are much concerned over the opinion in which they are held. Hence arise those of their deeds that are certain of winning the approbation of others, in reality pleasing themselves only. For none is more desirous than they of winning praise. Madame Kataoka, so cultured and intelligent that she had conquered her husband, universally esteemed for her wisdom in many a discussion, was yet unable to gain for herself any part of that deep friendship that all felt for the general. And naturally, left alone, she gladly received any display of affection toward her. The former servants of the household, a trifle

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uncouth, perhaps, but honest and affectionate, had been discharged one after the other, and the vacant posts had been given to persons of greater refinement, who knew how to address their mistress with honied lips.

Koma-san, of course, had no reason for disliking her sister, but since she had discovered that her step-mother appeared satisfied when people spoke ill of Nami, she took every opportunity to tell stories about her sister, which were often met by the astonished, incredulous glances of faithful Iku. This evil habit, which soon became in Koma an incorrigible vice, rendered her often useful to her step-mother, even after Nami's marriage.

Koma had hidden behind the second window, which opened on the veranda facing the west, and heard the merry laughter of the general alternate with the high-pitched laughing of her aunt. Suddenly the voices were lowered, the words grew confused, and the intent ear of the girl succeeded in catching detached phrases, clearly distinguishing the words "mother-in-law," "Nami-san" and a few others. And now the air was filled with the stirring sounds of a military song, sung by the sonorous voice of a little boy.

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One hundred thousand were the foe,
And kings rode at their head.
The general, fearing their heavy blow,
For the first time bowed his head.
Beholding now his sure defeat
He fled toward the rear
And sounded the signal for retreat
But — his soldiers refused to hear!

The boy, beating time with his foot as he sang, was attracted by the big red bow that projected from the opening of the window, and soon ran over to his sister despite her signs to keep away and her imperious shaking of the head and energetic placing of her fingers to her lips as a token to be silent. The youngster, pretending not to understand, happy at the opportunity to spite his sister, shouted at the top of his lungs, "Koma-san, what are you doing there?" Then the girl, seeing how useless was all attempt at resistance and fearing to be discovered, ran quickly and softly away with a strong shrug of the shoulders expressing forced resignation. But to the little boy she shouted angrily, "You noisy scamp!" And he to flee the rebuff, rushed into the general's study. As soon as he noticed the presence of his aunt he bowed, smiling, and then hopped upon his father's knees.

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“And so, my dear little Ki-chan, we’ve grown up, haven’t we? And you are doing well at school? Of course you are! In arithmetic, too? Fine! Excellent! Come on a visit to your auntie soon, with your mamma and papa.”

“Where is Michi?” asked the father, handing the boy a piece of candy. “Thank auntie for the sweets. Do you know where mamma is? Still in the sitting-room? Run and tell her that auntie would like to say good-bye.”

While the little boy ran off, the general, who seemed now to have something upon his mind, said to his sister-in-law, “Now do me the favor to persuade Iku. . . . From the very first I feared what has now happened. I shouldn’t have let her go. But Nami wanted it so much, and Iku was so happy not to have to leave her. . . . And now. . . . Do you understand just what I desire?”

At this moment Madame Kataoka returned.

“What? You are leaving us so soon? I’m very sorry to have been disturbed just when you came. . . . Always that charity business. . . I’m afraid it won’t succeed very well this time. And are you really going? Give my kindest regards to Chizu-ko-san. I want to see her all the more now that Nami has left us.”

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"She hasn't been very well recently, and she has gone out but seldom. Good day."

"Good day."

"I'll accompany you a short distance," offered the general. "Who's coming for a walk with papa, Ki or Mi?"

When Madame Kataoka was left to herself she sank into a rocking chair and called Koma.

"Koma-san, what were they talking about?"

"Really, mamma, I didn't succeed in hearing all of it, but I understood that they were discussing Iku."

"What do you mean,—Iku?"

"Yes, it must have been something like this. Takeo-san's aged mother suffers from rheumatism and is often very ill-tempered. It seems that on one of these days Iku, speaking with Nami, said to her, 'My poor mistress! I pity you from the bottom of my heart for the troubles you have to bear, but I believe that Madame Kawashima is very old and I'm sure that she can't live very much longer.' Wasn't Iku silly to speak like that, mamma?"

"Whenever that mumbling old chatterbox meddles in any affair she's certain to commit some folly!"

"It seems that the mother-in-law, passing by

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the door, heard the whole conversation and then began to spout sulphur and flame!"

"There! That's what one gains by eaves-dropping!"

"She carried on so badly that Nami, terrified, ran at once to her aunt Kato."

"To her aunt?"

"Yes. Nami-san always runs to her aunt for advice and assistance."

The woman smiled ironically.

"And what else?"

"Then papa said that he thought it would be best for Iku to go to his country villa and take care of it."

"Really?" exclaimed the step-mother, somewhat agitated. "And nothing more?"

"I might have heard more, but that rascal of a Ki-chan began to call me, and . . ."

CHAPTER VI

The Mother-in-Law

TAKEO'S mother was named Kei and was fully fifty-three years old, of robust build, excepting her frequent attacks of rheumatism. It was said that she could walk on foot, without any signs of weariness, the seven kilometers between her home and the cemetery where the tomb of her husband was situated, and this despite her more than one hundred and seventy pounds, which was a more noble weight than one usually met among the women of the nobility. This corpulence had developed after the death of her husband, six years before, for during his life she had always been pale and sickly. Some even suggested that, like a rubber ball, she had swelled back to spherical shape the moment the weight that oppressed her had been removed.

Her late husband had been a lesser member of the nobility; at the time of his marriage he was sailing in rather troubled waters, but during the exciting times of the national restora-

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tion he succeeded in making himself known and as a consequence for a long time occupied the post of governor under the ministry of Okubo, the great and worthy statesman who was killed in 1879 as the result of a misunderstanding. His obstinate character did not win him many hearts and he was forced to content himself with the friendship of a few, among whom were the Viscount Kato, and after the death of Okubo he was abandoned by almost everybody. According to evil tongues, the title of Baron had been conferred upon him, simply because he had had the good fortune to be born in that beautiful section of Kagoshima. Thus it came about that the stubborn and choleric Michitake accustomed himself to drowning his discontent in a rather strange fashion and when he had drained the contents of his fifth jar of saké and faced the persons around him with his broad shoulders thrust far back and his face as red as a demon's, there wasn't a single creature who dared to disagree with his opinions.

It was not easy to find a more unhappy domestic organization than that of the Kawashimas. The entire household was subjected to the despotic will of the tyrant, and his family

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lived as if amid the constant fury of a thunderstorm that surprises you in the open country under a tree, with no lightning-rod in sight. With the exception of Takeo, who from childhood had danced on his father's knee and knew no better company for his childish games, everybody, from his wife to the lowest servant, and even the balusters of the veranda, had felt with trembling the oppression of the master's iron hand. Even Yamaki, now known as a "gentleman merchant," had in his time served as the object of the tyrant's outbursts, which fact, however, did not prevent him from being a frequent visitor, for, with philosophical reasoning, he considered these events as a small tribute paid in advance for the sake of the boundless interest he would collect in the future.

Whenever the word was passed that "His Excellency" was in a dark humor, then you could have heard the mice run through the kitchen, and when his thundering voice made the walls of the house tremble, the servant girls would often drop some precious porcelain dish from fright. It was said that his subordinates, when they needed to consult him, inquired of

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the domestics in advance as to what direction the wind was blowing from.

It is easy to imagine the patience required for a woman to endure such a man for thirty years! As long as his own parents were alive, his character did not, by comparison, seem so extraordinary to her; but when the two old persons went to their last rest, one following the other after a brief interval, the baron's temper seemed to rise to new heights, and then her patience had to sustain inhuman assaults; for, after having at first tried to offer some resistance, she was forced to admit that the outcome was disastrous. Then the woman, instead of raising her brow bravely, began to bend like a reed before the fury of a tempest, and at last had recourse to the means that has always proved the best safeguard in all dangers flight.

Later, she gradually learned the art of confining the turbulent river within its banks and sometimes success would smile at her, but only after at least three unsuccessful attempts. Nevertheless she was never able to alter her husband's character; on the contrary, toward the last years of his life, he had such frequent explosions of wrath through the exciting effect

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of his abuse of alcoholic drinks, that his wife, despite the hardening experience of twenty years, suffered terribly in dragging out her wretched existence.

Often she forgot, too, her darling Takeo, and despite her gray hairs, she thought that she would have preferred to change the enviable honor of being a viscountess and wife of a governor for the peaceful existence of some laborer's wife.

But Time flies as rapidly as an arrow shot from a bow. After thirty years of marriage came the day on which her Michitake was stretched out, rigidly, in a coffin, with his lifeless gaze turned to heaven. . . . Then she breathed a deep sigh. . . . Two tears even coursed down her cheeks. . . . She wept, but at the same time felt as if relieved from a heavy burden, and as she breathed freely it seemed that she glowed with a new strength that she never would have felt during her husband's life, appalled by the sound of his thundering voice. Now she came forth from her silence, into the full light, and quickly she learned in her turn to exercise the rule of the house. The persons who had known her as a timid, modest

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woman, noticed with stupefaction the rapidity of her change.

A scientist expresses the opinion that man and woman, after many years of life in common, slowly come more and more to resemble each other, physically as well as mentally. Whether this general statement is true or not, the fact is that Madame Kawashima became a faithful reproduction of her husband, in looks as well as behavior, in stubbornness as well as in fiery temper.

A Japanese proverb speaks of "avenging yourself upon an enemy in Yedo by harming a person of Nagasaki," thus formulating an immutable law of nature in all its domains,—that of every action being followed by an equal reaction. If today a representative of the opposition launches a violent attack against a ministerial proposal or provision, the men of his party exult and applaud him enthusiastically without in the least suspecting that all the fire of his scorn comes from the importunate demands of a money-lender on the night before, which excited him deeply and urged him to the most violent and desperate deeds! And who suspects that the outbreak of a storm in the interior of Japan could origi-

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nate in a trifling atmospheric depression in the southern part of the Yellow Sea! And who would believe that a land-slide in Tuskarora could cause tidal waves along the coast! The actor Moronao is unsuccessful in his courtship of a noble woman, and as a result leaves us a work entitled *The Lost Arrow*.

Nature always insists upon balancing its accounts! And in order to attain this balance, according to the opinion of one who had a great knowledge of human nature, weak men show the same eagerness and impatience as a miser when his interest falls due, while the strong and virtuous man is content to entrust the regulation of his affairs to the divine bank, satisfied simply to fulfill the duties that fall to him with courage and patience! The sordid person yields unresistingly to the natural laws that govern the relations of inertia and motion; he follows the path of least resistance.

The patience of Madame Kawashima, having been under high tension for thirty years, desired to wreak its vengeance by subjecting others to the same grievous trials; scarcely had the coffin of her husband been closed when she opened the barriers that had served to repress her reaction till that time. The one

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person she had feared was no longer among the living no more could his heavy hand strike her And now, it seemed, she wanted to show everybody that her silence had not been born of weakness, but rather that she had been the strongest support of the governor. And she began this manifestation by dunning all those who at various times borrowed money from her husband and whose debt had grown greatly with the years. Despite the external resemblance, however, there was one great difference between her irascibility and that of the late tyrant: the latter had been a man of violent, domineering temper, and however oppressive was the display of his anger, there was always a certain character to his attacks that aroused sympathy and pity among those around him; Madame Kawashima, on the other hand, egotistic, suspicious, phlegmatic, and absolutely lacking in courage, became utterly insupportable in the moments of her wrath and the servants had good reason to complain more than they had ever grumbled in the past.

And this woman was Nami's mother-in-law!

All young women, immediately after marriage, encounter difficulties that have the effect

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of communicating to their characters a more distinctly feminine imprint.

The style of head-dress called *marumagé*, customarily adopted by married women, may easily be substituted by some other more modern fashion, and it often happens that some public servant, perhaps through politeness, addresses a married woman as "mademoiselle," an expression that embarrasses the young wife who, because of her bashfulness, does not correct the error. At home, however, the servants finally vex her with their ostentatious insistence upon the title "madame," which as yet pleases her little. But soon enough she becomes accustomed to her new status and beholds in their true light the persons about her who, before, have been enveloped in the cloud of her own timidity. Nami was at this stage of her life.

Manners and customs vary with every family and Nami, too, understood that she must not measure her new life by the standards of the old; she must forget that she had been Nami Kataoka and seek to become a perfect Nami Kawashima. These, indeed, were the exact words that her father had whispered to her as his last good wish before leading her to the carriage that was to take her to her new home. . . .

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She recalled the advice clearly, but upon first entering into the new family she realized that the contrast was indeed very great.

The property of the Kawashimas was far greater than that of the Kataokas. Takeo's father, during his term as governor, had accumulated a large fortune, — so great indeed, that the family was considered one of the richest of the nobility. Nevertheless to Nami it seemed that in the household of Kataoka, which was loved by the people and known by all through the fame of the general, everything shone in the full light of the sun while in her new place the home life and all the things pertaining thereto appeared as stagnant as a pool of water. The relatives were few in number; the friends were still fewer; the visitors that used to come from time to time while Takeo's father was alive abandoned the house completely after his death. The widow, for the rest, was not at all fond of society, and the head of the house, to whom she looked to confer upon it prestige and glory, was still too young and at the beginning of his career, for which reason he rarely was with his mother. Nami's step-mother liked all the cheerful, modern furnishings, and since she kept too busy

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with domestic affairs to go out very often, she surrounded herself with a certain ultra-refined luxury. Her principles of household management were very original and at times excited the criticism of the servants, who judged by the standards of ordinary common sense. But, as in all the homes of high military officials visited by distinguished society, everything in the Kataoka home radiated beauty and pomp. What a difference in the new house into which Nami was received!

The old habits, or rather the uncouth, popular customs, had not changed for thirty years, ever since Madame Kawashima had become the wife of an obscure man, and they remained in all their inflexible rigidity as if they were the only ones known to the world. The madame continued to take personal charge of the most trivial matters, even now that it had long become unnecessary, just as she had done in the days when it had been unavoidable. And although she used to designate as "steward" a certain Tazaki, — an honest, faithful fellow who really discharged the office of any ordinary house servant, she regularly looked over the monthly account of expenditures for wood, coal, and so on, calculating the expenses to the

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smallest detail. When Nami arrived with Iku as her special maid, Madame Kawashima exclaimed, "What luxuries these families of the nobility permit themselves!" Iku, in turn, exclaimed, "This isn't at all like a noble house. Let's hope Takeo won't be as stingy as his mother, and will know how to hold his place in society." In reality the discharge of Iku had been due as much to the indelicate criticisms that she used to make in regard to the old woman as to the conversation that Madame Kawashima had heard between Iku and Nami.

It is not surprising that Nami, despite her intelligence, should not be able to adapt herself at once to the new family's mode of living, or to change her behavior immediately and sacrifice her old habits to the common practises of the new household.

Only now did Nami begin to understand the deep significance of her father's words, and she decided in the bottom of her heart to accept her fate. An opportunity to put this decision into actual practise was to present itself only too soon. A short time after her return from Ikao her husband was obliged to leave on a cruise. Nami, having married a naval officer, was prepared to be left alone from time

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to time, yet this sudden separation from her husband only a few months after their marriage made her feel very sad, and for many days after Takeo's departure she went about as if lost and bewildered.

Nami's father had met Takeo several times before the betrothal of the naval officer to his daughter, and had from the first felt very friendly toward him; so much so, indeed, that Nami, who placed implicit faith in the general's discernment, without hesitation consented to the marriage. The future was to bring no disillusionment in regard to Takeo, who was of strong, kind character, of keen intelligence, of straightforward, affectionate nature, devoid of any taint of egotism. Nami beheld in him a miniature portrait of her own father whom she loved so devotedly. Even Takeo's way of walking with rapid, firm step, his graceful carriage and his laughter, as hearty as a boy's, recalled the general.

"How sweet life must be at the side of so good a man!" thought Nami, and suddenly felt that she loved with all her heart the husband whom her father had chosen for her.

Takeo, on his side, harbored a deep feeling of affection for his noble bride, and because he

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was an only son it seemed to him that he had acquired a sister at the same time as he had won a wife, and he surrounded her with the most solicitous attentions, calling her "my sweet Nami-san".

Scarcely three months had passed since the marriage and already they were as much in love as if they had known each other before birth, and their separation, although temporary, seemed insupportable to both.

But there was little time for Nami to indulge in tears over her misfortune, for immediately after Takeo's departure her mother-in-law was seized with a strong attack of rheumatism, and the widow's irascible nature was therefore rendered harsher than ever. Poor Nami, left alone (for Iku, too, had been obliged to leave), spent very unhappy days.

At college or in the army, the "freshman" or the recruit is always the butt of pranks played by the older men. Later, the newcomer himself becomes one of the "old guard" and in his turn takes revenge upon the beginners. This is an unalloyed pleasure, write certain authors.

A mother-in-law who had in her own time known the difficulty of adapting herself to the

ways of a new family might have been expected to show indulgence toward a young wife. But human nature is so frail that it is enough for the bloom of youth to depart and for a woman to find herself a mother-in-law, whereupon her tyrannical instincts are aroused and lead her to become the hateful mother-in-law of proverbial notoriety.

“Look, you’ve made a mistake in estimating the length of this gusset; you’ll have to make a long seam of about ten centimeters and then fold it over this way. . . . Ah! What a child!” This would be a fairly kind and friendly manner in which a mother-in-law might express herself. Even if she felt quite differently! “Heavens, heavens! Who ever saw the like! Here! Right here! Good Lord! Have you been asleep all these twenty years? And you, such as you, pretend to know how to run a house!” It might well happen that in a similar situation the mother-in-law, suddenly struck by a vague recollection of the aversion she had herself conceived many years before for an irate voice and a sarcastic glance that had persecuted her, should feel in her heart a certain fear of making herself just as unbearable, and seek to make affectionate and gener-

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ous amends for her outbursts of impatience. Such a mother-in-law might well be called a blessing from heaven!

In general, however, mothers-in-law proceed from an entirely opposite principle. "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth!" And they vent their rage upon the young wife of Nagasaki in order to get revenge for the persecutions that they suffered at the hands of their own mother-in-law at Yedo. It is a sort of right of reprisal that mothers-in-law exercise, almost following a natural impulse, and intensifying their cruelty so as to sate their desire for vengeance during the brief space of life still remaining to them.

Nami's mother-in-law was of this latter variety.

Poor Nami! After having long suffered at the hands of a Europeanized step-mother, she was now to endure the persecutions of a mother-in-law who worshipped antiquated, repressing ideas. What a sad fate!

Often kind Nami, out of a sheer impulse of pity, offered her services to the aging and suffering widow. But she was never fortunate enough to divine the exact wishes of her mother-in-law, and despite all her good will

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she could never succeed in satisfying the widow's ever new and strange desires. The old woman would thank Nami ostentatiously and immediately afterwards intentionally scold the servant with rebukes that the daughter-in-law knew were directed toward herself; all this in so strong and angry a voice that poor Nami trembled at the sound. Nami, with her ten years' of suffering under the sarcastic deluge of complaints from her step-mother! This system of indirect attack lasted only a few weeks, after which Nami herself was chosen as the target. And when Iku, her only compassionate friend in the whole house, was obliged to leave, Nami saw clearly that she had fallen back into that dark corner in which she had lived in the past and whence she had thought to have escaped forever. Rarely, a ray of sunshine would come to her, as for instance, when she would stand in her room before the picture of the dashing officer framed gracefully in silver. At such times her heart would melt with tenderness, she would fondle the cherished portrait, kiss it, and whisper soft entreaties in a loving voice as if it could hear her. And as she placed it back she would sigh, "Come back soon, oh, my darling!"

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For love of him she consented to drain the bitter cup, to sacrifice herself without protest, to bend humbly and meekly beneath the tyranny of a mother-in-law!

CHAPTER VII

On His Cruise

HONG KONG, JULY

DARLING NAMI:

"I write you while the thermometer shows 99 degrees Fahrenheit and I am swimming in perspiration. By this time you will have read the letter that I posted to you from the port of Saseho.

"Ever since we weighed anchor, after that short stay, the weather was continually beautiful but infernally hot, — so much so, in fact, that even we sailors of the Empire of the Rising Sun panted helplessly! About a dozen of our men, officers and sailors, were prostrated by the heat; I am well, however, and the walls of the hospital don't know me yet. Only the equatorial sun has had such an effect on my skin (which was already dark enough) that I don't know myself now. . . . That's a fact. . . . Yesterday I went ashore and when I entered the barber-shop and looked into the mirror I

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thought it was somebody else there! One of my comrades, the chief joker of our set, advises me to send you a photograph from here. . . . You may be sure I'll do nothing of the sort.

"Up to the present our journey has been uneventful (excepting the hard time we had with a monsoon we went through) and yesterday morning we anchored here, and were welcomed with joyful demonstrations, music, and shouts of "Banzai! Banzai!"¹

"Your letter reached me at Saseho. I've read it and re-read it a thousand times! I'm sorry to hear that mamma has suffered another attack of her rheumatism. But it's a great consolation to know that you are there at her side; I beg you with all my heart to take my place beside her. When she is ill it becomes harder than ever to please her, and I share with you, although only in spirit, all the burden of your pious duty.

"I hope that our relatives at Takasaki are all in good health. . . . How is Uncle Kato? As busy as ever, and inseparable from his gardeners' shears? . . . You write that Iku has left. I can't understand the reason, and it worries

¹ 'Banzai.' Literally, "ten thousand years." Corresponds to Hurrah, Bravo.

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me. I had taken a liking to her. . . . She's so calm and pleasant. . . . I'm afraid you miss her a great deal, too. Do you ever see Aunt Kato and Chizu-ko-San?"

"I learn that Chijiwa visits the house often. We have few relatives, and he is one of the few. And I know that mamma thinks highly of him, so that she likes to see him received very cordially. He is an intelligent and clever young man, and I am sure that he could prove useful to you in some difficulty.

Your loving,
Takeo.

P. S. Read the enclosed letter to mother. We'll remain here a few more days in order to take on provisions, etc., and then we'll leave for Sidney, via Manila; from there we'll go to San Francisco, New Caledonia, the Fiji Islands, and we'll return through Hawaii. I hope I'll be back by autumn. Address me at San Francisco, United States, care of the Japanese Consul."

SIDNEY, AUGUST

DEAR NAMI:

"Last year, in May, I was out fern-gathering at Ikao, with my sweet little Nami-san. Now I'm

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at Sidney, far, far away, in the opposite hemisphere. When, at evening, I linger to contemplate the Southern Cross, while my thoughts are bewildered in the confusion of my recollections, I feel how real and sad is the fact that yonder everything moves in most rapid change!

“Some years ago, at the time of my first tour of the world in the schoolship, I suffered much from sea-sickness, but this time, on the contrary, I feel very, very well. And I also have as companion on this voyage a strange feeling that I did not experience at that time. . . . When I stand on the bridge and watch the dark southern sky, where the stars sparkle like countless diamonds, this feeling becomes stronger than ever and it seems to me that right before my eyes, in the shadow, I can see the profile of your loving little face. . . . Oh, don’t laugh at this illusion that always gives me a foretaste of the joy of seeing you once again!

“While I’m with my mates I’m able to feign indifference, and to sing with them, ‘What do we care for the tears that are shed in our homes, — we whose souls are sated with glory?’ — Yet (and I ask you again not to laugh at my childishness) the picture of my Nami-san has never left its place next my heart. . . . Even

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now, as I write to you, I see distinctly the face of her who will read this letter, in her little room shaded by the palm-trees. . . .

“In the bay at Sidney many sweethearts and young couples are out on long pleasure trips in their yachts. And I catch myself thinking that if everything goes well, when Nami and I begin to grow old I’ll buy a yacht of at least 5000 tons. . . . I’ll be the commander our children will be the sailors and we’ll sail the four seas. And we’ll come to Sidney, too, and then I’ll tell a white-haired Nami the dreams of a young ensign who was sailing along in the self-same waters many, many years before. . . .”

Your Takeo,
Who loves you with all his heart.

TOKYO

MY DEAR TAKEO:

“I read and re-read more than a thousand times the dear letter you sent me from Hong Kong. I’m happy to learn that despite the oppressive heat your health continues good. Your mother, too, is better, and I hope you’ll feel more at ease on that score.

“I spend these days monotonously, leading

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my customary life. I try in every conceivable way to satisfy your mother, — more than ever, now that you are so far away, but I am so stupid that all my efforts are useless in achieving the desired results. . . . How impatiently I await the news of your early return!

“The folks at Akasaki are all well, and now they are at the baths in their villa at Zushi. The Katos are also at their place at Okitsu, and we are left almost alone in Tokyo. Iku is well, and is at present with my parents at Zushi. I wrote to her, sending along your greetings, and she answered, thanking me warmly for your kindness.

“I feel keenly now that I never learned anything of much importance. The direction of household affairs, which I neglected very much at my own home, despite the advice of my father, now comes very hard to me because of my inexperience. I would gladly follow your advice to study English, but I fear that your mother would not look kindly upon my remaining too long at the writing-desk. . . . So that these days I devote myself exclusively to domestic affairs and I hope you will not think that I avoid studying through negligence and without a good reason.

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“I am ashamed of myself to see how sad and lonely I feel, and to notice how intensely I want to see you again. I dream that I am a dove and that I am flying in search of you. . . . My only consolation I find in gazing at your picture and the picture of the vessel that is carrying you across the ocean. At school I was never very much interested in geography, but today my only recreation is that of following the route of your ship on an old map that I found among my abandoned note-books. At times I think that if I were man I, too, would become a sailor and go with you on all your cruises. . . . Pity my childish thoughts and pardon my telling them to you. But all my thoughts belong to you. I never had noticed before that the newspapers give reports of the weather at sea, but now I follow that department closely, and although I know that you are far away, still I tremble with uneasiness when they forecast some tempest along the coast.

“Dearest, I beg you to take the best possible care of yourself. . . . ”

Your loving wife,

Nami.

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TOKYO, OCTOBER.

MY DARLING TAKEO!

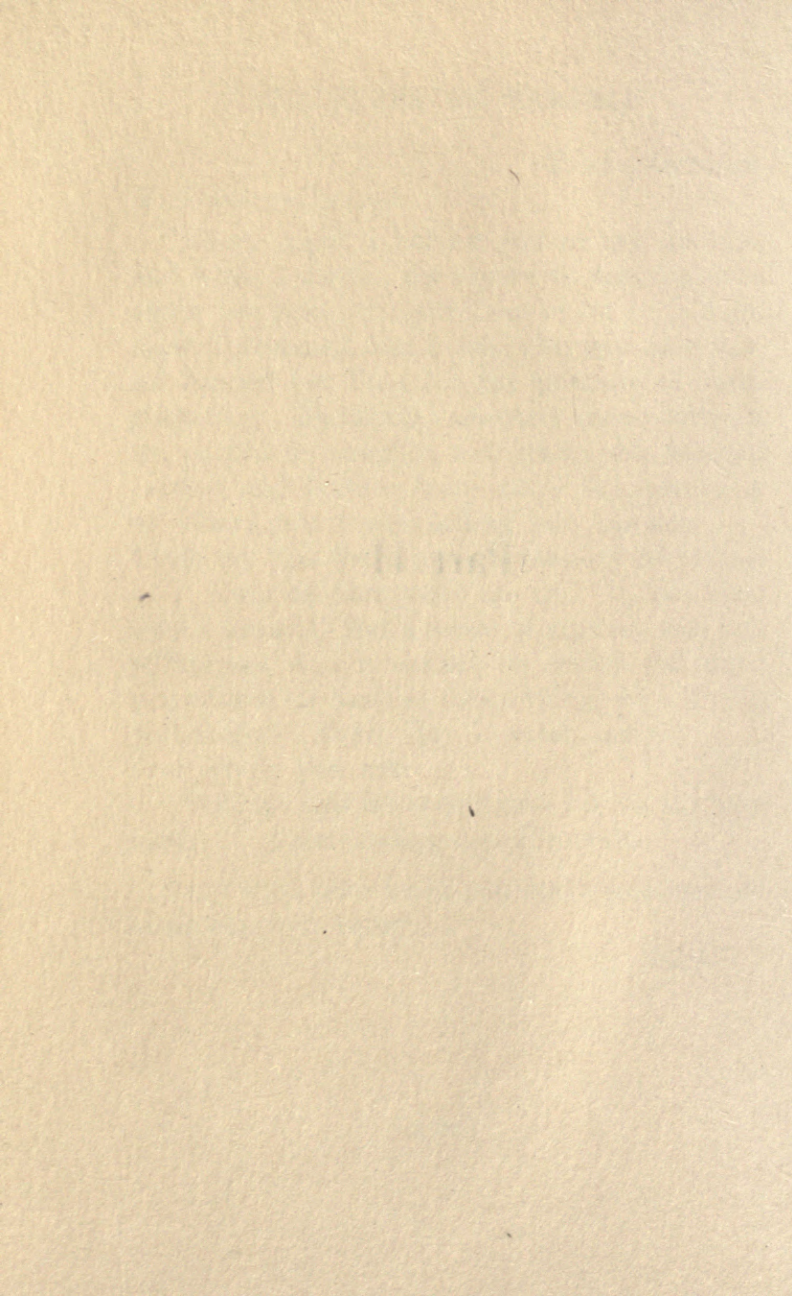
“Every night I behold you in my dreams, and when I awake, my desire to see you once again becomes stronger than ever! . . . Last night I dreamed that I was with you on a vessel headed for Ikao for the purpose of fern-gathering. Suddenly somebody came between us, parted us roughly, and while you receded farther and farther from me, I felt, somehow or other, that I was falling into the sea. . . . From my lips there came a real cry of terror. . . . Your mother woke me up. It had been only a dream! But a sense of anguish was left within me, and it cannot be driven out until you return. I have so many things to tell you, personally! Every day I watch the sky. . . . over where you are.

“Perhaps this letter will find you on the way back. . . . I am sending it to Honolulu.”

Your wife, who loves you and sighs ever so much for your return,

Nami.”

Part II



CHAPTER I

Home Again

KEI, the widow of Kawashima, mother of Takeo and Nami's mother-in-law, is seated by the fireplace warming herself near the crackling flames. Suddenly, as the hour sounds from the clock on the wall, she turns and exclaims in a loud voice, "Eight o'clock! It seems to me that they should have got back by this time!" Then, shaking her head, she grasps her snuff-box with her flabby hand, inhales a small pinch of snuff noisily and cocks her ear. Although the house is situated almost on the outside of the city, the sound of *kurumas* rumbling along the pavements in rapid course is heard. In the evenings of the beginning of the year great animation reigns in the capital. From a neighboring house comes wafting the happy, shrill voices of young men and women on vacation, and from time to time the echo of their piercing laughter reaches the old woman's ears. Then she murmurs impatiently, "I'd like to know what they're so

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happy about! Pah!" And as her thoughts turn to her son she continues, grumbling, "It's always that way when they go to Akasaka. . . . Everybody forgets his duty. Takeo as well as Nami. All of them! Alas for us old people, and the youth of our day!" As she mutters she tries to change the position of her limbs, tortured by her rheumatism, and the movement causes her a cry of pain. "Ah!" Then, seized by an attack of fury she grasps the snuff-box once again and cries, impatiently, "Matsu! Matsu!" At this point two *kurumas* stop before the door and a servant, in a loud voice, announces the return of his master. The old woman is in the act of reproaching Matsu for his delay when a merry voice interrupts her.

"Good evening, mamma!"

Takeo comes in, taking off his gloves, and behind him walks Nami, noiselessly. She removes her cloak, which is carefully received by a maid, and then she approaches her mother-in-law, saying kindly, "Good evening, mamma. I'm sorry that we are a little late."

"Ah! Here you are back again! You really were out a long time!"

"That's so, mamma," replies Takeo in a conciliating tone." First we visited the Katos,

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and they wanted to go along with us to Akasaka. Uncle, aunt, Chizu-ko-san, Nami and I, — the five of us were greeted at Akasaka in most festive style. There were a great many other guests there, too, and the time passed so quickly that I never noticed how late it had become."

As he felt his cheeks grow very warm, — his face had taken on a color redder than usual, — Takeo observed, half to himself, sipping a cup of tea slowly, "I drank so much on the visit that I'm afraid I'm a little tipsy."

"Are they all well at Akasaka?" asked Madame Kawashima.

"Yes, all well. They asked me to give you their best regards, and to forgive them for not yet having come to visit you. They thank you very much for the presents you sent."

"And speaking of presents, Nami-san," exclaimed Takeo, interrupting her, "where did I put that? Ah, here it is," and from Nami's hands he took the tray she handed him, which contained pheasants, several quail and some woodcocks.

"Oh, some game. . . . and how much!"

"Mamma, the general was very lucky in his recent hunt; he came back only on the evening of the thirty-first. They were about to send

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us some fine birds. Tomorrow we expect a boar."

"A boar, too? Is it possible? Nami, your father is only three years younger than I, isn't he? As a young man he was very agile and lively. It seems that he still is."

"Why, ma, just imagine what a robust fellow he is! He spent three nights on the mountain and he doesn't feel the slightest effects. He is proud that he can vie with the youngsters on all their trips."

"I should think so, and he's right! When rheumatism gets hold of us then we're no longer good for anything. The worst enemy of mankind is illness. It's almost nine. You'd do well to change your clothes and go to bed. . . . Ah, Takeo, I forgot to tell you that yesterday Yasuhiko was here."

Takeo, who was on the point of leaving, stopped short; his countenance assumed an expression of dissatisfaction. Nami, too, came near to hear.

"What's that? Chijiwa was here?"

"Yes, and it seems he had some special business with you, Takeo."

After a long pause Takeo said, "And I have

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some special business with him, too. Do you believe he came for money, mamma?"

"Why? But no. . . . do you think? How can you think such a thing?"

"I heard a few things about him while we were out visiting. . . . All right. I'll try to see him soon."

"Yamaki was here, too."

"That lunatic Yamaki!"

"He came to invite us to the dinner he's giving on the 10th of January."

"What a bore!"

"You'd do well to accept the invitation. He has never forgotten the favors that your father once did for him."

"But —"

"Takeo, it will be better for you not to refuse."

"Very well. We'll think it over. . . . But now I'm going to bed. Good night."

And after him Nami said, in a soft voice, "Good night, mamma," as she timidly drew near to her mother-in-law, whose countenance had now become sinister.

The husband and wife entered their room, where Nami helped Takeo to don a garment of padded silk, around which he rapidly tied a

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white crape girdle. He sat down in an easy-chair while Nami brushed the clothes he had just removed and placed them in a closet. When she had finished doing this she sat down beside her husband.

“You must be tired, darling.”

“Takeo, who was looking over the visiting cards that had been left during the day, raised his glance and said, “It’s you, Nami-san, who must be tired. . . . You beautiful dear, you! Charming creature!”

“What?”

“You . . . I say that you’re a delicious little wife.”

“Now, now. Don’t make me blush!”

As she said these words she blushed in earnest, and removed her face from the rays of the lamp that illuminated her cheeks, which were usually pale. . . . The little face, framed in the artistic head-dress, looked as beautiful and as finely chiselled as a work of art. She wore a kimono of black silk embroidered with sea waves and gulls whose wings were spread wide apart, and a large ribbon of yellow satin was tied about her waist, while on her bosom sparkled a precious jewel fashioned like a for-

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get-me-not. . . . This was the souvenir that Takeo had lately brought her from America.

Takeo, as he looked upon her there in the light of the lamp, with her smile upon her lips, felt himself under the spell of his wife's noble beauty and it seemed that he had never beheld her so fascinating.

"Nami, it seems to me, as I look upon you dressed as you now are, in clothes I've never seen you wear before, that you've changed into another woman, — a woman I never knew."

"If you keep on talking like that I'll have to run away."

Takeo laughed happily.

"Then I won't say anything more. And why will you have to run away?"

And Nami, with a sweet smile and a coquetish glance, replied, "— To change my dress!"

Takeo had departed at the beginning of summer, for the maneuvers, hoping to return in the autumn. But he had been detained for a long time at San Francisco, pending repairs to his vessel, so that by the time he reached home it was near the end of the year. Now, on the third day of January, he had gone with

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his wife to make his first visits to the Katos and the Kataokas.

Takeo's mother, a woman of very old-fashioned tastes, cared very little to surround herself with modern nick-nacks; yet her affection for her son led her to make several concessions to his desires, and Takeo's room was artistically decorated with Japanese and foreign objects placed on the furniture and in the corners of the room. The white mats of the floor were covered with a fine, bright green carpet; on the walls of the alcove hung a most attractive marine painting; higher up, opposite this, was a picture of Takeo's father. On another side of the room was a bookcase full of books, and several shelves. In the center of the alcove, on the back wall, hung a sword from the famous factory of Kanemitsu, the favorite weapon of Baron Kawashima. On a bracket hung an officer's cap and a field-glass; on one of the door-posts of the room was suspended a dagger. Of the photographs on the walls one represented the vessel on which he had made his latest journey; another showed a group of young men in uniform: his classmates of the Etajima naval academy. Other photographs were scattered about the table and among them

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was one showing Takeo, as a baby, with his parents; in this one Takeo was sitting on his father's knees. Another picture represented General Kataoka. Although Takeo was of a very careless disposition, the room was in the best of order. Not a speck of dust could be seen, and on the table, in a vase of antique bronze, were several plum blossoms, tastily arranged. All this revealed a kind and provident fairy hand into whose charge the direction of the room was given. The little woman who possessed this heart and these fairy fingers smiled from an oval silver frame beside the vase of flowers, and seemed to be dreaming, afloat in the perfume that was exhaled from the gracefully intertwined blossoms. The lamp shed its rays of white light all through the room, and upon the bright green of the carpet the flames from the cosy fireplace threw showers of fiery red gleams.

One of the most beautiful moments in life — one of those moments in which the heart feels penetrated and eased by a sense of great comfort and complete peace, is certainly that which follows the return from a long, perilous voyage, — when, having changed our traveling clothes for a snug kimono, we may sit at ease

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beside the domestic hearth listening to the whistling of the wind and the gentle, monotonous tick-tock of the clock. And what a sense of completeness is imparted to that happiness by the thought that upon our return we have found mother in good health and are surrounded by the love of a young and affectionate wife who has been waiting for us with a trembling heart!

Takeo was smoking, rocking in his easy-chair, imbibing all the sweetness of this domestic peace. One thought alone disturbed him, — that of Chijiwa, — of whom his mother had spoken but a moment before and who was now recalled by a visiting card found upon the table. It was not so many hours previous to this that the echo of some not very pleasant things had reached Takeo's ear. . . . Several days before a card addressed to Chijiwa, who was then away, had been forwarded to the seat of the General Staff, and an official who by mistake cast his eye upon it read a demand for payment from a certain money-lender who had, perhaps, intentionally, written the amount of the debt in red ink. Besides this, it had been discovered that certain military secrets had

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leaked out in mysterious fashion, and had been utilized by clever speculators.

Chijiwa had been seen upon the stock exchange by several persons, to whom it had seemed that such a place was hardly the kind for a young officer to frequent. As a consequence of these various indications Chijiwa had fallen under suspicion, and because Takeo's father-in-law had been apprised of everything by the chief of the staff, who was a friend of his, the father-in-law had advised Takeo to keep an eye on his cousin, and to exhort him to follow a different road.

"The scoundrel!"

Takeo said this aloud, as his gaze rested upon Chijiwa's card. But on that particular night he was hardly in the mood to remain preoccupied with unpleasant thoughts; indeed, after having decided to have a serious talk with his cousin at the first opportunity, and then see what was to be done, Takeo directed his meditations to more inviting subjects, while Nami entered with a cup of tea that she had prepared in the meantime.

"Black tea? Oh, thanks, Nami!"

As he spoke he left the easy-chair and sat down beside the fireplace.

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"What's mamma doing now?"

"She just went to bed."

Nami looked at Takeo's red countenance, while he sipped his tea slowly.

"Have you a headache, perhaps, dear? Maybe you've drunk too much saké. My mother insisted so much."

"No, no, not at all. I feel very well. What happy hours we spent, didn't we? I was so interested in your father's conversation that I didn't notice the number of goblets I emptied," replied Takeo, laughingly. "You really have a most likeable father, Nami."

And Nami, smiling at him affectionately, answered, "And I've also a most excellent. . . ."

"A most excellent what? What were you about to say?" urged Takeo encouragingly, opening his eyes wide with expectation.

"I don't know," responded Nami, blushing and lowering her eyes to the ring with which she was playing.

"Really! Where did you ever learn how to say such nice things! In truth the jewel I brought you is hardly the kind to make me worthy of them, I assure you."

Nami rubbed her cheeks very gently with her hands, which she had been warming at the

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fireplace, and after several moments of silence, in which only her long, sad sigh was heard, she resumed, "Mamma must feel quite abandoned! When I think that in a short while you'll be leaving us on another trip it seems that time flies altogether too fast now. . . ."

"But if I were to be at home all the time you'd say to me, at least every other day, 'Dear Takeo, don't you think it would do you good to go out for a walk?' Isn't that so, Nami?"

"How can you say such things? How can you even think them? Will you have another cup of tea?"

Takeo took another sip and then, flicking the ashes of his cigarette, cast a long look of satisfaction about him.

"After having slept in a bunk for more than six months my room seems enormous to me, and everything looks too luxurious and too beautiful. . . . And then. . . it seems that this is my second honeymoon. Doesn't it seem that way to you, too, Nami-san?"

Indeed, after a separation of many months shortly after their marriage, they had met again with unspeakable joy, to live over once more, from hour to hour, the happiest period of their past.

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Little by little their words sank to a whisper. Then this, too, died away without any desire on the part of the couple to break the silence that enfolded them. But their glances met and their lips were half open, in an ecstatic smile. The sweet perfume of the plum blossoms filled the room.

All at once Nami raised her head as if struck by a sudden thought.

“Then, — Takeo, — you’ll really go to Yamaki’s dinner?”

“Oh, to Yamaki? My mother desires it so much that I suppose I’ll have to give in.”

“I should like to go with you.”

“Why not? Excellent! We’ll go together!”

“But, no. I prefer to remain at home.”

“Why?”

“Because I’m afraid.”

“Afraid? Of what?”

“They hate me, and. . . .”

“Hate you? And who in the world could hate my Nami-san?”

“But there is one who hates me. Need I tell it to you? It’s O-Toyo-san.”

“What an idea! Such a silly girl! I don’t believe anybody will ever marry her!”

“Mamma says that Chijiwa is on very in-

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timate terms with the Yamaki family. *He might marry her.*"

Chijiwa? Chijiwa? That wretch? I knew that he was a very wily fellow, but I never thought that he would deserve suspicion of dishonorable actions. I'm almost ashamed of today's officers, although I'm one of them. There isn't even a shadow of the old cavalierly spirit, and their first thought is to get rich. Of course, I don't insist that the officers should love poverty. Everybody has the right to forge his way upward and to keep the welfare of his family and himself in mind. But I believe that men whose sole duty is to see to the defense of their country should take care not to become mixed up in speculations; least of all when it leads them to dishonest deeds, such as borrowing money at usurer's interest, or getting commissions on army supplies, or favoring speculators by revealing military secrets. And the ones that exasperate me most are the gamblers. How many of my comrades are ruined by this vice! It pains me extremely. They break their backs bowing in humble flattery before their superiors, and then turn around and rob their subordinates. I have seen it with my own eyes."

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The young ensign, however inexperienced and honest he was, had learned the dangers of evil habits and attacked his colleagues ardently, speaking with deep earnestness, as if there sat before him one of the most culpable of them, instead of the gentle Nami, who listened to his outburst with a smile of satisfaction and love, proud of the words of just scorn that fell from the lips of her brave husband. In her ingenuousness she beheld him already the Minister of the Marine or at least a Chief Admiral, or on the way to effecting a sane, radical reform in the entire defensive forces of Japan.

“I believe you’re right, Takeo. I don’t understand these matters very well, but I remember when papa was minister he used to receive a large number of gifts from many sources, accompanied at the same time by countless prayers and requests. Papa abhorred that system and used to reply that the worthy projects would be carried out even without presents, and that the unjust proposals would not be effected for ten thousand times as many gifts. Despite this, however, persons sought any pretext whatsoever to send him presents, so that papa used to say, laughing, ‘No, I’m

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not at all surprised that people chase so much after government positions.' ”

“It’s true. The navy and the army certainly pay, in this respect. Money is everything and *does* everything!”

Takeo looked at the clock, which was then sounding the hour, and exclaimed, “What? Already ten?”

“Ten? How time flies!”

CHAPTER II

The Reception at Yamaki's

THE estate of Hyozo Yamaki at Shiba was not very large, yet, from Sakuragawa street it extended to the foot of Nishinokobudo hill. A lake in the park, surrounded by large rocks, imparted an almost sylvan aspect to the scene; numerous paths wound in and out among the hills and meadows; narrow bridges crossed the lake at the points where its banks were nearest together. Maples, pines, cherry trees and clumps of bamboo grew in profusion; in their midst rose, in sharp contrast, a high stone lamp-post and the cupola of a little temple to Inari,¹ covered with fantastic arabesques. In the furthest corner of the garden was hidden an arbor, as if to surprise the stranger who explored the verdant spot. It seemed strange indeed that so beautiful and luxuriant a park should be encircled by the walls of an estate that looked so modest from

¹ 'Inari.' The goddess of rice. Temples to Inari are very numerous and are guarded by two stone foxes, whence the popular belief that the fox is the god of rice.

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without. But upon this ground Yamaki liked to build the castles of his fancy, not only in the metaphorical sense, but also in that practical one which requires pillars of real gold—however they may have been acquired.

It was a little after four in the afternoon, and already there could be heard, now near, now far off, the evening cawing of the crows. A man in complete native costume came out into the garden in order to escape from the noise in the hall and took the path leading up a little hill illuminated by the rays of the dying sun.

It was Takeo, who, having yielded to his mother's urging, had accepted Yamaki's invitation and now found himself tired and disgusted with the festivities among noisy strangers to whom he had to speak and be polite, although they were as meaningless to him as the saké that he was forced to drink in order to be obliging.

Yamaki, with foresight, had ordered numerous diversions, arranged for various hours with the purpose of entertaining his guests without interruption. Among the latter attractions was a chorus of dancers, which was to serve as prelude to a wild orgy to be joined in by all. For some time Takeo had been trying

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to take his leave, for all this vulgarity was abhorrent to him, but Yamaki, with his importunate insistence, had constrained him to remain till the end. Moreover, Chijiwa had not yet appeared, and Takeo felt more than ever the need of a serious talk with that fellow. Scarcely had he been able to escape without being noticed than he descended into the garden to cool his burning face with the fresh air.

Several days after the confidences imparted by his father-in-law in regard to Chijiwa, Takeo had received a visit from a stranger who carried an allegator-satchel in his hand, and demanded the payment of 3000 yen due on a note signed by Yasuhiko Chijiwa and indorsed by the name of Takeo Kawashima. Under the lines purporting to be the signature of Takeo appeared Takeo's seal, which he regularly affixed in all transactions of this nature. The stranger said that although the note had fallen due many days before, the debtor had not only avoided all meetings, but had suddenly disappeared altogether, so that despite himself the lender was forced to have recourse to the indorser for payment. The note was in regular form, the signature looked authentic, and the letter that the stranger brought with him was

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undoubtedly in Chijiwa's handwriting. Surprised at this queer occurrence Takeo wanted to clarify the whole matter and he reasoned that neither the steward Tazaki nor his mother knew about the affair and that neither had authorized Chijiwa to use Takeo's seal. When to these things he added the rumors that were circulating about Chijiwa, he readily realized the sad truth which this latest fact served to confirm. As a result he had tried to search out his cousin on that very day, but he had been unsuccessful. However, he received a letter from Chijiwa saying that the writer desired to speak with him next day, when he would meet him at Yamaki's house.

Takeo intended to speak very openly to Chijiwa about the matters that had come to light, and to tell him concisely and categorically just what he thought of such actions, and then turn his back upon him for good.

Chijiwa was very late.

Takeo slowly climbed the path that led to the top of the hill between two hedges of thick bamboo; his face wore a look of weariness and ill-repressed scorn. The arbor, half hidden by a thick growth of ivy, was open before him; he entered and sat down to rest himself in that

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deep silence. After a few moments he heard the rapid tapping of light footsteps and suddenly saw before him the form of O-Toyo. Her hair was gathered in a high *shimada* and she wore an ample violet gown of flowery design. She drew herself to full height proudly before Takeo, unmindful of the contrast between the costly elegance of her dress and the coarseness of her behavior. She wrinkled the narrow arch of her eyebrows and exclaimed in an ironic tone, "So here you are."

Takeo, who had never moved an eyelash at the discharge of a 30 centimeter gun, shuddered at this violent and unexpected attack, and desiring to avoid all discussion, without further ado he turned his shoulder and was about to walk off. The girl, now roused to a high pitch of excitement, followed him.

"Takeo-san!"

"What does this mean?"

"My father wants me to show you our gardens."

"You show me? Oh, I don't want to trouble anybody."

"But. . . ."

"Please leave me to myself. . . . I prefer it."

A rebuff expressed so baldly would have dis-

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concerted the most wily seductress, but O-Toyo was determined not to let him escape at any cost.

"I can't understand why you should flee from me."

Takeo was silent for several moments.

Ten years before when Baron Kawashima was prefect and Yamaki was an employé in service, Takeo had often met little O-Toyo and amused himself by pinching her and teasing her in all the other ways employed by youngsters with little girls. Often he made her cry, without liking any the less the little companion of his childhood games. O-Toyo had never ceased to cherish in her heart a deep feeling of affection for the mischievous boy who had grown to manhood and now bore the title of Baron Kawashima. Naïve and bluff as he was, Takeo had none the less divined the feelings of the girl and was careful to avoid her during his brief and rare visits to Yamaki's home. To-day, however, he had been taken by surprise and had fallen into her trap.

"Flee from you? Certainly I have no reason to flee from you. I go wherever I please. That's all."

"You're very arrogant!"

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Takeo began to feel the ridiculousness of the situation and in his confusion he tried once more to dash off. But to no avail. In that hidden nook of the garden he was at the mercy of his pertinacious pursuer.

Unfortunately not a person happened to come that way to relieve him of his difficulty. It was just like a scene from *The New Day*, as played by Takagawa.

Suddenly an idea occurred to him.

"Hasn't Chijiwa come yet? O-Toyo-san, please see whether he has yet arrived."

"Chijiwa will not come until nightfall."

"Does he often visit your house?"

"Yes. Yesterday he was here and remained a long time, talking with my father."

"Really? But he may have come by now. Please go and find out."

"No, I don't care to go."

"And why not?"

"Because you're trying to elude me. Even if you have no sympathy for me, and even if you think Nami-san very beautiful, it's cruel of you just the same to repulse me in this manner."

Takeo had no desire to begin a discussion with the girl and once more tried to make off.

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Fortunately a voice was heard calling the name of O-Toyo, and a servant girl approached with word for her mistress. Meanwhile the young man walked rapidly behind a clump of bamboo and breathing with relief he turned quickly toward the house, the walls of which would protect him from a second assault.

The sun had set. The guests had dispersed and the only noise came now from the kitchen.

Yamaki, after having cast off the heaviest part of his clothes, staggered, snuff-box in hand, toward the little room where Takeo and Chijiwa were awaiting him. His red forehead, covered with beads of perspiration, shone with the reflection of the light from the lamp.

"Have I kept you waiting, gentlemen? I feel so happy when I'm surrounded by a jovial, lively company." He laughed a little, then resumed, "See here, Baron, you're not drinking at all. You'll never make a perfect sailor! Your father could empty bottle after bottle. I myself, although I'm getting old, still remain Hyozo Yamaki who can put down half a gallon or more. . . ."

Chijiwa enveloped Yamaki in the sinister look of his jet black eyes.

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"You're in good humor, Yamaki-san. I suppose you've made money by the shovels-full."

"Indeed. Sure. Since we're on that subject. . . ." His words died out in a confused babble, while he tried several times to light the pipe between his teeth. When at last he had succeeded, and could blow out the smoke in large circles, he resumed his discourse.

"That — you know what I mean — is now on the market. I received a secret tip. It seems they're in deep water and they'll have to make a good contract on advantageous conditions and at low prices. The matter promises well and will produce even better results now that foreigners are permitted to reside in the interior. Perhaps the Baron would like to invest a twenty or thirty thousand yen? . . . Oh, of course, in the name of Tazaki-kun. I'm positive that you'll clean up a fortune. . . ."

The drunken man's tongue was now running at a gallop. Chijiwa eyed Takeo intently. Nami's husband was seated opposite him, with a calm, inscrutable countenance. Then Chijiwa asked, "Those people . . . of Awomono street. . . . Isn't that so? Didn't they clean up a tidy bit of money some time ago?"

"Yes, but they ruined themselves by running

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the thing wrong. If the deal is put through cleverly there's a gold mine in it!"

"What a wonderful opportunity! And what a shame that I'm only a poor devil without a yen to my name! But you, Takeo-san,—you'd do wisely not to let this opportunity slip from between your fingers! If you'd just give me a lift—"

Takeo had not yet spoken a word, only his eyebrows had contracted with displeasure, and the wrinkles of his forehead became deeper when, throwing a proud look at both men, he began to speak. "I thank you for your kindness. But I think it's useless to try and make money for a fellow like me, who never knows when he's going to be thrown to feed the fishes or chosen as target for the enemy's shells. I beg you to excuse me, but I'd far rather give thirty thousand yen (if I had the money) to the National School for Sailors, than invest it in speculations of the sort you mention."

Chijiwa, who had not ceased studying the expression on Takeo's face while the latter was talking, motioned to Yamaki, saying, "Yamaki-san, don't think me selfish if I ask you to delay the transaction of this deal until I've completed the affair that's on my mind.

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Baron Kawashima has been kind enough to condescend to my desire, and I hope that you, too, will do what I request. Have you your seal with you, Yamaki-san?" Meanwhile he brought forth a promissory note and handed it to Yamaki.

It is hardly to be wondered at that Chijiwa was now under suspicion. Taking advantage of the position he occupied he had been not only a secret informer for Yamaki during recent years, but he had also diverted government funds, risking them in speculation, with the result that he had lost 5000 yen. By dint of constant begging from Yamaki, whom Chijiwa knew how to bend to his will, and by gathering together the crumbs of his own dissipated patrimony, he had succeeded in assembling some two thousand yen. There still remained a deficit of three thousand yen to fill. His only relatives, the Kawashimas, were rich, and beside this the widow of the governor liked him very much, but Chijiwa knew the old woman's miserliness too well to ask her directly for even a loan. . . . Time was pressing and he had to have in hand the required sum, — not a small one. It was then that he committed the serious deed of forging Takeo's seal in order to pro-

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cure, at exorbitant interest, the amount needed. When the note fell due he was most importunately pressed by the creditor, who did not hesitate to address a demand for payment to the government office. No other recourse remained than to beg Takeo to lend him three thousand yen in order to meet the other three thousand when they fell due. In such a manner he would redeem Takeo's forged signature with Takeo's own money.

Several times, after Takeo's return, Chijiwa had tried to find his cousin, but without success. Then he had been obliged to leave on service and his absence had lasted several days. At the present moment he was very far from suspecting that his creditor had already turned to Takeo for satisfaction.

Yamaki nodded affirmatively, while Chijiwa gave him the note. He rang a bell, calling for his red ink-pad, took a seal from his pocket, and after having glanced at the paper affixed his seal at the bottom, aside of the signature.

Chijiwa grasped the note, placed it before Takeo and said, "It's all ready, now. When can you give me the money?"

"I've got it with me."

"With you? You're not jesting?"

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"I'm in earnest. Here three thousand yen. . . . Please count them over."

He handed an envelope to Chijiwa, who seized it and tore it open; after a few moments, however, his face became livid with rage and he began to gnash his teeth. He crumpled into his fist the note that he had thought was still safely locked in the money-lender's desk, — the note that Takeo, after the information he had received, had paid for the dishonest debtor.

"What's this? This. . . ."

"Don't pretend that you know nothing about it. Come, now. Confess your guilt. . . . Be a man. . . ."

Beholding himself outwitted and humiliated by Takeo, whom he had always despised as a simpleton, Chijiwa could not master his rising anger and he bit his lips madly.

Yamaki stood as motionless as a statue, his pipe grasped upside down between his teeth, and he looked mechanically from one of his guests to the other.

"Chijiwa," spoke Takeo at last, "I'll say no more about this unfortunate occurrence. We're cousins, and I'll not have recourse to the law to have you punished for forging my seal. I paid your creditor the three thousand

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yen, so you may rest easy. No more bills will reach your office."

Chijiwa, completely taken aback, could hardly control himself. He would gladly have thrown himself upon Takeo and scratched out his eyes. Despite his excitement, however, he felt that any attempt to justify himself would be useless. Suddenly he changed tactics and said, humbly, "My dear cousin, I'm really mortified to have deserved your severe words. I was forced to. . . ."

"Forced? Forced to procure money by violating the laws and besmirching your honor?"

"One moment. Let me speak. It happened this way: I was dunned incessantly by my creditor and I didn't know where to turn to get the money. If you had been at home I should naturally have turned to you. But how could I explain matters to your mother? His demands became so pressing that I . . . in order to escape that torture. . . . and expecting to receive a certain sum that should have reached me a month ago. . . . I. . . . Of course I knew it was a serious matter, but I intended to confess everything as soon as I'd get the money. . . ."

"That's a lie! How can a man who really

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intends to confess seek a loan of three thousand yen with such brazen impudence?"

Yamaki, shocked at the violence with which Takeo had pronounced these words, as if he had wanted to throw himself upon Chijiwa, — considered that the time had come for him to intervene as peace-maker, and he began, "My dear Baron, calm yourself, — calm yourself. Don't get excited. I know nothing about this matter, but I believe you will do well not to get too angry with your cousin. Two or three thousand yen isn't such a great sum. . . . Chijiwa was wrong, — there's no doubt whatever about that. But if all this should become known he'll lose his position. For this reason alone, Baron, I beg you to. . . ."

"I have already said that on this very account I redeemed the note and that I do not intend to bring action against him. Furthermore, Yamaki, it would be much better if you would keep silent. This affair isn't exactly your business." Then, turning to Chijiwa, he continued, "I'll do nothing, I repeat, but from this moment forward consider our friendship completely at an end."

Because the matter was taking such a turn Chijiwa understood that there was no longer

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any need for anxiety on his part, and he found once more his ironic, wily smile.

"Friendship at an end? I won't be very deeply grieved at that. . . ."

Takeo's eyes flashed like lightning.

"That matters very little to you, — now that you have the money. You scoundrel!"

"Say that again!"

Yamaki, meanwhile, had recovered a little of his self-control and thought it might be worth while to intervene a second time.

"My dear Baron. Chijiwa. My good fellows. Be sensible. Stop. Just a moment. You mustn't part like this. Wait, — wait, Baron." And approaching now one, now the other, he kept repeating, "Wait, — wait."

In the meantime the two cousins had become calmer. After a few moments Takeo broke the silence, looking fixedly at Chijiwa.

"Let's say no more about this. We were brought up together, like brothers, and I've always considered you superior to me not only in years but in understanding. I had hoped that we could be reciprocally useful and I would gladly have helped you with all my heart and all my strength. But lately my esteem for you has vanished. I have heard rumors about

you that were hardly flattering. That you have deceived me is a personal matter, but outside of that you. . . . I'll not say it here. I'm not interested to know how you spent that three thousand yen. I'll say just one word more: Perhaps you don't know how intently everybody's ears are cocked and everybody's eyes are sharpened, and perhaps you don't know of what you're suspected. I advise you to have a care and not to compromise your honor as a soldier. For you, every other feeling yields to the passion for making money. But think for a moment of the disgrace! From this day forward I forbid you to enter my house. As for the three thousand yen, I present them to you."

Takeo took the note and tore it to scraps. Then he strode out of the room impetuously, throwing to the floor O-Toyo, who was crouching and listening just outside the door. He left her crying at the top of her voice and walked straight to the main door without turning around.

Yamaki, dazed as if struck by a thunderbolt, at last raised his eyes toward Chijiwa's, who was at the same time looking at him, and said, "What childishness! Chijiwa, consider-

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ing the matter well, three thousand yen for a mere rupture of friendship isn't at all so bad. What do *you* think?"

Chijiwa lowered his glance to the scraps of paper into which Takeo had torn the note, stood absorbed in meditation for some time, then left the room, biting his lips violently.

CHAPTER III

An Exchange of Confidences

IN the first days of February Nami was taken ill with a bad cold, which at first grew rapidly better, but one evening she remained up very late to finish a gown for her mother-in-law and as a result suffered a relapse. On today, the twenty-fifth of the month, she was still too weak to get out of bed.

Every year, during the severest days of winter, it is the custom to say that there never was so cold a winter before. But in this winter the north wind brought frequent storms of snow or rain and even upon sunny days penetrated into one's very marrow. Persons of the most robust constitution fell ill, while those already sick died. In the newspapers the list of deaths was much longer than usual. The persistent cold prolonged Nami's indisposition, for she was of delicate fibre; she showed no symptoms of serious illness, but the days passed without her languor diminishing; her head remained heavy and her appetite did not return.

AN EXCHANGE OF CONFIDENCES

The clock struck two in the afternoon. When the last vibrations had died away a deep silence returned, disturbed only by the slow, rhythmic tick-tock of the clock. It was a beautiful day for that time of the year, and although the four paper windows were closed, veiling the blue sky of spring, the light of the pale sun penetrated into the room and several almost invisible rays seemed to perch upon Nami's fingers as she lay knitting a pair of black silk socks. A sun-beam lit upon her black tresses, which fell loosely over a cushion white as snow. Upon the window at the left was silhouetted a slender stalk of sumach rising from behind a large bronze vase. On the right was clearly outlined the shape of a tall, flourishing plum-tree, whose sprouting buds, swayed by the breeze, seemed to be greeting each other or perhaps whispering to one another, "Soon we'll be flowers and Spring with its warm kiss will fill us with strength and beauty!" Lower down upon another window appeared the head of a kitten whose movements were betrayed by the rapidly changing shadows. Suddenly the pet gave a jump, to catch a moth that had been lured from its place by the sun's warmth. The moth escaped, leaving the kitten flat on

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the ground. Soon kitty began to lick its paws and the shadow of its snout rose and fell without pause upon the paper screen.

Nami watched the cat's motions as if the scene were painted before her, and smiled; then, dazzled by the shining reflection of the sun she closed her eyes, sinking into a revery. All at once she awoke with a start, turned away, took up her knitting anew and commenced to ply the needles vigorously.

Heavy footsteps were heard upon the veranda and upon the paper windows appeared the shadow of a massive body and large features. Suddenly the shadow vanished and soon proved to be that of the widow Kawashima, who entered the room and sat down beside Nami's bed.

"And how do you feel today?"

"Much better, thank you, mamma. I could have got out of bed, but—." As she spoke Nami put aside her work, adjusted the folds of her gown and tried to raise herself to a sitting position. The widow restrained her.

"No, no. Why? I'm not a stranger. Don't let me disturb you. What? Are you still working? That won't do you any good. A sick woman should think only of getting better and

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letting herself be cured. And remember, Nami, you mustn't think of Takeo; think of yourself and try to get well quickly, my dear."

"Pardon my not rising. But I've been confined to bed so long!"

"There, Nami. You don't talk to me as you would with your mother. You're too reserved with me."

The widow did not express her full thought. She was in the habit of complaining that modern daughters-in-law were not at all properly respectful toward persons of her position; she could not complain of this defect, however, in Nami, and had been moved to show greater indulgence to her daughter-in-law on that account. But today she was occupied with another thought, which seemed to have come to her suddenly when she asked, "You received a letter from Takeo, didn't you? What does he write?"

Nami brought forth a letter from under the pillow and showed part of it, saying, "He writes that he expects to return next Saturday."

"Really?" And as the widow continued to read she muttered, as if to herself, "Uhm! How silly it is for him to want to take you away from here for your health! To expose you to

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a journey during this cold weather would make you ill even if you were in the best of health. A cold is easily cured, but you must have patience; he's altogether too scared, however, and talks of doctors and changes of scene! When I was your age I didn't take to my bed for any little indisposition that came along, and even when my son was born I got up after the tenth day. You just write to Takeo not to worry about you, seeing that I'm here."

The widow spoke these final words with a smile, but in her eyes could have been read an expression of discontent. As she walked off Nami rose a little and said, "Excuse me if I cannot rise."

When she was left alone Nami heaved a deep sigh.

She could scarcely believe that a mother should be jealous of her son's wife; yet ever since Takeo's return from his cruise she had been forced to notice that a strange feeling had been born between her and her mother-in-law.

When he had returned from his long voyage and had found Nami's health not of the best he understood all the torments that she had suffered during his absence, and acted more affectionately and tenderly than ever toward

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her. Nami was deeply happy to be the object of such loving devotion, but this felicity was spoiled by her vexation at her mother-in-law's jealousy.

"How hard it is," she thought, "to feel one's self loved by such a man as Takeo, and to love him in return, and then have to put up with and conciliate a mother-in-law like the widow Kawashima!"

"Madame, Mademoiselle Kato has come to see you."

At the sound of her maid's voice Nami opened her eyes. The announcement of the welcome visitor brought an expression of pleasure to her countenance.

"Oh! It's you, Chizu-san! How good of you to come!"

"Do you feel better today?"

A girl of about sixteen years, with her hair gathered in a graceful *shimada*, approached Nami's bedside after having laid aside her silk bag and her lilac-colored bonnet. The slender miss was dressed in a black cloak and her shining, jet-black eyes opened under perfectly arched eyebrows. This young and beautiful girl was Chizu Kato, the first-born daughter of Nami's aunt.

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Nami and Chizu were cousins and had become close friends from the very first time they had played together in the garden, so that little Koma, Nami's sister, used to complain that nobody was left for her to play with. Even after Nami's marriage, while one after another of her former companions had become estranged, Chizu, happy that they were not separated by a great distance, came often to visit Nami.

These cordial visits from her favorite Chizu were next to Takeo's letters, the greatest consolation that the solitary, sad wife possessed during her husband's protracted absences.

Nami smiled. "I feel much better today," she said, "but my head is as heavy as if it were solid lead and my cough bothers me a little, too!"

"Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that! And the weather is still so cold!"

Chizu sat down near Nami upon a cushion that the maid respectfully placed before her. The visitor brought her bejeweled hands close to the fireplace and then placed them against her cheeks.

"Are uncle and aunt both well?"

"All well, thank you. They feel very much

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worried on your account because the cold weather continues. We were talking about it only last night. When you'll get a little better you'd do well to go to Zushi for a change of air. It will certainly do you a lot of good."

"Have you already gone there? Takeo, too, wrote me from Yokusuka that I need a change of air."

"He, too? Then you see. . . . Try to do it as soon as possible."

"But I think that even without this precaution I'll be better soon."

"You ought to be very careful of your health."

A servant girl entered, bringing a cup of tea for Chizu.

"Kane, where is mamma?"

"She has a guest."

"Ah! And who is it?"

"A man from the country."

"O-Chizu-san, I hope you have a great deal of time today. Kane, bring something good for O-Chizu-san."

"No, no. I come too often and you mustn't always feel obliged to receive me formally. Wait a moment." She took from her pocket a little box and said, "Madame Kawashima is

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very fond of rice tarts. I've brought a few for her. But if she has company now I'll send them to her later."

"Thanks, dear. She'll be immensely pleased!" Then Chizu took out some bright red oranges.

"Just look at these! Aren't they beauties? These are for you. I'm afraid they'll be none too sweet!"

"How beautiful they are! Do peel one for me!" Nami sucked the fruit with delight and tried to brush back the hair that fell over her forehead.

"Don't you like it that way? Isn't it better simply to knot your hair over your head? Wait, I'll help you. No, no, you don't have to sit up. Just lie as you are. That's fine."

Chizu took the necessary articles from the nearby dressing table and began gently to arrange Nami's hair.

"I haven't told you anything yet about the reunion of the alumnae that took place yesterday. You received a notice, too, didn't you? It was very interesting. They all asked me to give you their best wishes." With a soft smile she continued, "It's only a year since we left school and a good third of us are already mar-

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ried. It was particularly amusing to see Okuto-san, Honda-san and Kitakoji-san in their *marumagé*, with their faces wearing such a serious air. Am I hurting you? And then,—ah! If you could only have heard! Everybody was talking only about herself! And there was also a discussion about the matter of married children leaving their parents after marriage. Kitakoji-san said that it was a bad practice and confessed that her inexperience in the running of a household had found valuable aid in the advice of her good mother-in-law. Okuto-san, though, stoutly defended the advantages of immediate separation. You know, her mother-in-law is a strict, hot-tempered thing! Oh, it was so amusing! And when I wanted to speak my opinion, trying to refute them all, they refused to listen on the grounds that I wasn't married and had no voice in the matter. Am I pulling your hair too tight?"

"No, not at all. That must have been a most interesting meeting!"

"Everybody spoke, naturally, according to her own experiences. Habits and customs vary with each family, so that it's impossible to arrive at any exact, general rule."

"O-Chizu-san, do you remember how auntie

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said one day that a young couple living alone becomes lazy and selfish? I believe she was right. We shouldn't forget the old folks. Don't you agree with me?"

Nami was of a meditative nature and was especially fond of domestic labors. She had always given close attention to her father's counsel and had watched her step-mother's actions with a critical eye. Ever since she had been a little girl she had looked forward to the day when she could carry out her wishes and her own ideas in the direction of a household. But in the Kawashima family she had found a state of things remote from her childish thoughts. The administration of the house rested in the hands of an empress-mother, and Nami was nothing more than a powerless imperial princess. She tried, none the less, to adapt herself to this arrangement, in hope of better days to come. But every time she found herself between mother and son, and was unable to help her husband as much as she would have desired, she secretly wept bitter tears at her sad lot. It was then that serious doubts were born in her as to whether the theory, so dear to her step-mother, of separation from the parental roof, was not generally to be pre-

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ferred. Once such a notion had appeared to her entirely incompatible with the traditional and virtuous customs of her nation. Nami had made up her mind to submit, however, if only to keep the promise she had made to her father, and to show her love for Takeo.

Chizu tied Nami's hair with a white ribbon. It was impossible for her to interpret exactly the quiet thoughts of her cousin who for ten years had been brought up under the tyranny of a step-mother and had now, for a year, patiently suffered the caprices of her mother-in-law. She looked at Nami closely, asking in a low voice, "Does she still get angry very often?"

"Sometimes. But she's been very good to me since I became ill. Only, she doesn't like me to keep thinking of Takeo. That's the worst of it all. And even Takeo himself tells me that she is queen here and that I must force myself to please her more than himself! And so,—but let's not talk of these matters. I feel much better with my hair that way. Thanks. It seems that my head has become lighter."

Nami touched her hair-dress lightly and then closed her eyes as if fatigued.

Chizu laid down the comb, and paused for a

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few moments before the dressing table. Her glance alighted upon a small jewel-casket, which she opened, exclaiming, "I could look at this pin forever! It's splendid! Takeo-san has excellent taste, hasn't he?"

She put down the case and went back to her place beside the bed.

"Shunji is always urging me to study French or English. He says that a diplomat's wife ought to know at least one of these languages. But I find them too hard."

Shunji, Chizu's fiancé, was at present an employé in the Foreign Department.

"How glad I'd be to see you in a *marumagé*, although the *shimada* becomes you so well!" said Nami, smiling.

"Oh, have pity!"

Her charming eyebrows came more closely together, but an involuntary smile curled her lips and betrayed even more openly her inner thought.

"Do you remember Hagiwara-san, Nami,—the one that left school a year before us?"

"Yes, I do. She married Matsudaira."

"That's the one. Well, they were divorced yesterday. So I was told."

"You don't say! And what was the reason?"

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“Her husband’s parents were very fond of her, but Matsudaira didn’t care for her at all.”

“Didn’t they have a child, too?”

“Yes; one. But Matsudaira became acquainted with a bad woman and he was so little ashamed of his infidelity that Hagiwara’s father grew angry and said he didn’t want his daughter married to so infamous a man. . . . And at last, he called his daughter back to her home.”

“How terrible it must be to have a husband who doesn’t love you. Not even the love of your parents is enough compensation for such a loss!”

Nami sighed.

“It makes me sad to think that so many girls educated together at the same school, side by side, should afterwards be dispersed through the world, each according to her own fate! . . . O-Chizu-san, we will always be friends and be always near each other, won’t we!”

“I desire that as much as you do.”

Their hands met in a long clasp of affection.

After a few moments Nami spoke, smiling.

“If you only knew what dreams I have, lying here in idleness! You’d laugh at me if I told them to you. Just suppose that in many years

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around we have a war with some foreign nation and Japan comes out victorious. Shunji-san would then go as Minister of Foreign Affairs to discuss terms of the peace treaty, and Takeo, as Chief-Admiral of the fleet, would blockade the ports of the enemy."

"And uncle at Akasaka will be Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy, and my father, as member of the Chamber of Nobles, will make a speech demanding hundreds of thousands of yens as indemnity."

"And O-Chizu-san and I would join the Red Cross!"

"But you won't be able to do that unless you get stronger than you are now," said Chizu, laughing.

Nami joined in the laugh, but scarcely had she done so when she was attacked by a fit of coughing and had to bring her hand to her chest at the left side.

"We gossiped too much. Are you in pain?"

"Yes. When the cough takes me I feel a stitch in the side."

As she spoke Nami turned her gaze toward the last rays of the setting sun.

CHAPTER IV

At Zushi

FIVE days after his encounter with Takeo, Chijiwa was suddenly transferred from his office at the general headquarters to a regiment of the first division.

Chijiwa had been abjectly humiliated by his cousin, and could not stifle or even hide a burning aversion for Takeo.

In the life of every person there comes a time when everything seems to go wrong. Disappointments and failures follow in rapid succession, and everything undertaken seems foredoomed, as if Heaven itself were determined to send its chastisement without surcease.

For several years Chijiwa had found himself in this unenviable position and was unable to extricate himself. Nami had been taken from him by Takeo, his speculations had failed, and his debts had caused him to fall in disgrace before his superiors.

Takeo, whom he had been in the habit of considering a mere fool, had humiliated him,

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and thus his relations with the Kawashima family, his only relatives, had been broken.

But this was not all. Without any warning he had been brusquely transferred from the position he held at the headquarters. This blow was all the more heavy since it struck directly at his hopes of rapid promotion. The brilliant career he had tried so hard to launch was seriously impeded by his transfer. He saw himself, indeed, forced to occupy an insignificant post in the infantry, obliged to fulfill all the duties that hitherto he had looked down upon scornfully as menial labors of the common soldier. Chijiwa was too conscious of his guilt to offer protest. But he did not intend to acknowledge defeat or to show any discouragement because of his being lowered to the ranks; he began to execute his new humble duties without revealing any shame. Up to that day Chijiwa had shown himself to be endowed with great presence of mind, which he never lost, even in the most grievous turns of fortune. But recent events had so overwhelmed him that as soon as he felt that he had fallen into deep disfavor with those who had lately been his protectors his blood rose to his brain and his pulse hammered faster in his veins.

Chijiwa's present plight was that of a man who, having begun a rapid ascent of a mountain from whose summit success smiles down at him, is violently thrust back after the first few successful steps. But who had thrust him back? From several allusions in Takeo's conversation and from the fact that the head of the General Staff was an intimate friend of Viscount Kataoka, he suspected that the latter was not a total stranger to his disgrace. Chijiwa knew that Takeo was indifferent to money matters, so he supposed that the resentment shown by his cousin in the affair of the three thousand yen must have a more serious basis than anger at the loss of his money. For Chijiwa had not the slightest suspicion that Takeo's wrath could be attributed to the forgery of his seal.

Perhaps Nami had revealed to Takeo the old story of Chijiwa's declaration of love, which she had repulsed. Gradually yielding to this suspicion he began to feel that this was the true clue to the matter, and his hatred and jealousy waxed greater than ever. His disappointment in love, his vexation at the loss of a most promising position, his jealousy, his hatred for the general and for Nami and Takeo,—all these

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were so many fiery arrows that pierced his passionate soul and set it aflame. He had always been proud of his shrewdness and used to make fun of those who, blinded with rage, always lose sight of their ulterior aims in the folly of their present anger. But now, after this rapid succession of humiliations and misfortunes, he so far lost the artificial calm of his disciplined nature that he felt he could no longer control his passions and that he must open some safety valve to give vent to the boiling, tempestuous poison that coursed through his veins.

Revenge! Revenge!

There is no greater lust in the world than that of sipping the blood of a hated enemy. The mere thought of this joy makes our eyes sparkle; our tongues smack voluptuously against our palates.

Revenge! Revenge!

But how? What powerful bomb could Chijiwa discover to destroy the hated houses of Kataoka and Kawashima at a single stroke? How place it so that both houses should be blown high up in the air? What a diverting scene it would be to see the butchered flesh from the bodies of those hated men and women, and the fragments of their bones scattered to perdi-

tion, still trembling with life. Oh, that would be indeed an unforgettable orgy of jubilant vengeance!

This was the problem that Chijiwa, since the month of January, had been trying painfully day and night to solve.

It was now the middle of March and the petals of the plum blossoms were beginning to fall to the ground like flakes of snow.

One day Chijiwa had to go to the Shimbashi station to greet a friend who had been transferred from the third division to an office in Tokyo. As he was coming out of the waiting-room he passed a tall lady who was accompanied by a young girl. The woman was upon the threshold of the ladies' waiting-room.

“How are you?”

Madame Kataoka and Koma were standing before him. At first Chijiwa's face changed color, but upon seeing from the expressions upon their countenances that they knew nothing about his affairs he breathed more easily. He hated the general and Nami, but he understood that it was perfectly futile to appear angry with Madame Kataoka. So he bowed very courteously and asked, with a smile, “How is the Madame Viscountess?”

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"We haven't seen you for some time. What's the matter?"

"I would gladly have come to see you, but I've been exceedingly busy these past few months. Where are you bound for?"

"Zushi. And you?"

"I'm waiting for a friend. Are you upon a pleasure trip?"

"Why, don't you know that we have a sick woman on our hands?"

"A sick woman? And who can she be?" asked Chijiwa, surprised.

"Nami," replied Madame Kataoka.

At that moment the bell sounded and passengers came hurrying into the station. Koma grasped her mother by the arm. "Mamma, it's time for us to go. Come, quickly!"

Chijiwa took charge of the ladies' valise, ready to accompany them to their car.

"Is she very ill?"

"Yes. Her lungs are affected."

"Her lungs?"

"A touch of tuberculosis. She had a bad hemorrhage and went to Zushi some time ago to recover. We are on our way to see her." She took her valise from Chijiwa, thanked him,

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and said, "Good-bye. I'll be back soon and I'll expect you to call on us."

As he observed the costly cashmere shawl and the bonnet trimmed with bright red ribbons disappear inside of a first-class compartment, Chijiwa could not suppress a vindictive smile, which despite his efforts mounted to his lips.

When the physician saw that the symptoms of Nami's illness were becoming worse he did everything in his power to employ heroic measures without as yet awakening apprehension about the poor suffering wife. Despite these skilled efforts to combat the disease, Nami's condition continued to grow more serious and at the beginning of March it seemed that the young wife was doomed to become a victim of consumption.

Even her mother-in-law, who, always pre-occupied with her own health, used to laugh at the indispositions of youth and turn a deaf ear to all proposals for a change of air and for special cures, was very much disturbed by Nami's hemorrhages. She felt certain fears,—for she had heard talk about the contagious nature of the illness,—and thus, without any opposition, followed the advice of the doctor

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who advised Nami to be sent to the Kataoka villa at Zushi with a trained nurse.

Nami had been deeply impressed by the first violent manifestation of the disease. Her feeling was that of a solitary traveler who, lost on an immense shore, finds himself suddenly encircled on all sides by hosts of black, menacing clouds. When, however, that horrifying silence had been broken, and Nami saw herself enveloped by rumbling thunder and blinding flashes of lightning, hurled about by the howling winds and drenched by torrents of rain, she summoned all her strength to flee soon from that terrible tempest and the sight of the dark clouds.

Yet how horrible did the remembrance of that first attack remain, and how vivid!

It was the second of March. Nami was feeling better than usual, and was amusing herself by arranging flowers of various colors in symbolic groups,—an innocent pleasure that for a long time she had been unable to enjoy. She had just asked her husband, who happened to be close by, to help her place the flowers. They were out on the veranda and she was plucking some twigs from a splendid little plum tree.

Suddenly she felt a keen pang in her breast,

her head sank to her shoulder, a stifled cry came from her throat, and the fatal gush of blood, so much feared, flowed forth from her lips, which had at first contracted in a horrible spasm. The terrible moment that she had awaited with a sad presentiment had come at last; before her confused mind arose a fleeting vision,—that of a grave seen afar through a scarcely transparent veil.

Ah! Death!

When Nami was still a little unhappy baby life had contained few joys for her and death would not have brought much grief; but now she had begun to know the sweetness of life and it seemed that life of itself was a great, incommensurable joy when compared with death. Ah! That thought was too cruel,—it was unbearable. And now that she faced an uncertain future she decided to struggle, to fight the frightful plague with all her strength. She summoned all her courage, forced herself to appear full of hope, and bravely lifted her heart that had been too soon oppressed and cowed by a mad terror of death. Carefully and diligently she submitted to all the rules and remedies prescribed for her, much to the satisfaction of the physi-

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cian, who was happy to find so obedient a patient.

Takeo, who was at that time stationed at Yokusaka, not far from Zushi, came often to see her; indeed, he rushed to her side as often as his duties permitted. She received frequent letters from her father, and her aunt and Chizu paid her many visits. And good old Iku, who had been separated from her the previous summer, took such tender and affectionate care of her that Nami, despite the sadness occasioned by her illness, felt as if she were in a paradise, surrounded as she was by so much solicitous attention and so much love. . . . And at so beautiful a place. And besides, there was an old and faithful man servant who directed the affairs of the house most intelligently and knew how to procure for his beloved mistress the best of comforts.

It was still cold in the city when Nami left it to take refuge in the charming strip of warm, sun-bathed seashore. It seemed to her that she could breathe more easily in the bright light of fruitful nature and in the still brighter atmosphere of human sympathy. It was not long before she began to feel relieved and much better; after two weeks the hemorrhages ceased

and her cough, too, gave signs of diminishing. The doctor, who came frequently from Tokyo to watch the progress of the case, expressed great satisfaction upon seeing that the disease was making no further inroads. He could now assure them that there was hope of recovery because the patient had taken every precaution and had scrupulously followed his injunctions.

It was evening of the first day of April. In the capital it was still too early for the blossoming of the cherry trees, but here in Zushi the wild cherries on the slope of the hill were beginning to bloom and across the ample extent of pale green could be seen, here and there, pleasant clouds of white.

On this day, however, nature had seemed oppressed by a sense of sadness. A slow drizzle had been falling since early morning. The hills and the sea were blurred to the sight, merging into a gray, uniform, dull background. It seemed that the long spring day would never come to an end. Towards evening the rain began to fall faster and there arose a wind that howled and played havoc with doors and paper windows, while the reverberating thunder of the waves sounded like the charge of thousands of wild steeds. The fishermen's huts had been

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barricaded and not a light revealed the existence of a human being.

In the Kataoka villa a familiar scene was taking place. Takeo had arrived, received with joy after a long wait that had begun in the early hours of the day. Owing to a delay he had not been able to leave until toward evening, and then he hurried to the house, defying the menacing darkness of the tempestuous night.

He had already changed his clothes and after having eaten supper he was now reading a letter, leaning against the table.

Before him Nami was embroidering an elegant purse. Often her needle rested idly between her fingers, as she raised her glance and smiled at her husband, or sank into a reverie, with her ear attuned to catch every sound that came out of the stormy night. In her hair was inserted a sprig of cherry blossoms with tender little green leaves. On the table between husband and wife was a lamp that shed a soft, rosy light over the room. In a vase near the lamp another sprig of cherry blossoms slowly dropped its snow-white petals. Perhaps the starry crowns were still dreaming of the spring-time splendor that had enfolded them that morning on the green hills. Outside, the wind

moaned incessantly and the rain fell with a ceaseless monotone.

Takeo folded the letter and at last broke the silence.

"Your father seems to be very much worried about you. Tomorrow morning I'll leave for Tokyo and I'll do my best to get to Akasaka."

"What? You're going away again tomorrow? Oh, yes. Your mother expects you. I should love to go with you. . . ."

"Nami-san, you mustn't forget why you're in exile!"

"Oh, if this is exile I wish it would last forever! Dearest, you may smoke."

"Do I look as if I wanted to smoke? Thanks, I'd better not smoke while I'm here. I'll make up for it tomorrow."

Nami smiled. "Well, seeing you're so good," she said, "I'll let you taste some excellent cakes. Iku will soon bring them in."

"Thanks. Did O-Chizu-san bring them to you? What are you working at there? It's really very pretty!"

"It helps me pass the time. I'm making it for mamma. Oh, never fear,—it doesn't tire me at all. On the contrary, it diverts my mind. And this evening I feel so well! Won't you let

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me stay up a little later than usual? I don't look sick any more, do I?"

"I'm not surprised that you should feel better, seeing that your famous physician, Takeo Kawashima, is at your side. Really, though, I think you improved very much during the past few days. There's no longer any danger. . . ."

Old Iku, who at this point came in with the tea and cakes, exclaimed, "What a terrible storm tonight. And how lucky that the Baron has come! We'd never have been able to sleep a wink if he hadn't arrived. Mademoiselle Chizu has left us and the nurse, too, has returned to Tokyo. Of course, there's old Mokei, but. . . ."

"How awful this kind of weather must be for the men at sea. And perhaps the ones who anxiously await their return are even more to be pitied!" said Nami.

"Oh, this sort of weather is comparatively fine!" observed Takeo, while he sipped his tea and rapidly caused two or three pieces of cake to disappear. "But if you had been with us during a certain tempest in the Yellow Sea, you'd know what a storm at sea means! When even a vessel of 4000 tons is lifted up like a feather to a height of twelve or fifteen metres,

while the deck is overwhelmed by furious waves and the whole hulk creaks as if it's going to come apart like a wooden shack! I'm ready to wager that you'd not feel very comfortable at such a time!"

The wind outside increased in fury and was now throwing the rain violently against the house, while the rain drops struck against the windows like pebbles thrown with force. Nami closed her eyes and Iku shuddered. All were silent for some time, and only the voice of the storm was heard as it howled with growing rage.

"Let's not speak of such horrible things. In weather like this it's better to keep the lamp well lighted and to talk about cheerful matters. This place seems warmer than Yokosuka. The cherries are already in blossom here."

Nami arranged the flowers in the vase.

"Kind old Mokei gathered these on the hillside this morning," she said. "Aren't they beautiful? I'm afraid that this storm is going to do lots of damage to the tender plants and the budding branches! However, these flowers are strong and courageous. This afternoon, as I was reading some verses by our Buddhistic poetess, Rengetsu, I found these sweet lines:

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Oh, how I love you, luminous, odorous flowers,
When as you flourish in full-colored, beauteous vigor.

Yet, oh how soon does the grave ope to receive you!
The first of the sun's sweet kisses is almost the last.

Then do you die, calmly, pure as the air,
Sweetly exhaling your breath like a dream of love.

For you are indeed a dream, of light and perfume:
Sent from above, oh flower, and cannot remain.

You pass o'er the earth, e'en as a flash through the
 heavens,
And in a divine moment of life are consumed.

“What's that? Consumed in a moment?
Our people love flowers too much,—and other
frail things that fall too soon. It's all very
sad, to be sure, but it isn't good to be too
tender-hearted. In war and in other enter-
prises those who fall are conquered. I would
rather encourage in people, through means of
poetry, the proud and constant feeling that
makes one love and cling to life up to the very
last breath. And my song would be far dif-
ferent. Listen. It'll surprise you, perhaps.
It's my first attempt.” Takeo recited:

Smile not at me if I wildly embrace this life.
Nor call it a childish caprice,—this thirst of mine

For life. Although I am bewildered here below,
Still can I not believe that death is a boon.

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For that my heart rejoices, drunk with delight,
Despite all the bitterness and suffering,

In seeing the flowers gently rise to new life,
Upon their dead stems, in the first sweet days of
spring.

“How do you like those verses? Don’t you think I’ve surpassed even Hitomaro?”

“How pretty they really are! My master is a genuine poet. Don’t you think so, Madame Nami?”

Takeo beamed with delight.

“Now that old Iku has passed judgment, my fame is assured!”

The noise of the storm in chorus with the thunder of the waves filled the pause in their discussion and it seemed to the three silent persons that they were lost at sea in a fragile boat. Old Iku went out for some water. Nami brought out the little thermometer that she had a short time before placed next her body and showed it happily to her husband. Her fever continued to diminish. Then she began for a while to arrange the flowers that she had just laid upon the table and suddenly she said, in a soft voice, “It’s just a year today. . . . I recall it all so clearly. I was riding off in the carriage and my folks were at the door waving

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me good-bye, and I could find no words to say farewell. And then I remember . . . at Tameike bridge night overtook us and before us rose a full moon. And at that season the cherry trees were in bloom, too; while the carriage slowly climbed the hill the white petals fell about us in a merry dance. Do you remember? One petal fell on my hair and I didn't know it until auntie took it off when we got out."

Takeo placed his cheek against her hand.

"How quickly the years fly by!" he said. "You'll see. In a short while we'll be celebrating our silver wedding! I still recall how reserved you were on the day of our wedding. And how surprised I was to find you so calm!"

"And now will it surprise you more still if I tell you, in confidence, that I was so bewildered, I scarcely was able to hold the ceremonial cup in my hands."¹

At this moment Iku came in.

"What a fine time you're both having now," she said. "How good it makes me feel to see your happy faces! It makes me think of the pleasant days of Ikao."

"Ikao! Oh, how happy we were, there!"

¹ Reference to the custom of exchanging the cup of saké — nine times. (San-San Kudo).

"And do you remember when we went fern gathering? I recall one woman that wasted no time!"

"But it was you who urged me to the work!" replied Nami, smiling.

"It will soon be fern season again. So hurry up and get well, dearest. And we'll go back and gather some more. . . ."

Despite the tempestuous night, the next day was calm and beautiful.

In the afternoon Takeo was to leave for Tokyo. In the warm hours of the morning, when the wind was still, he wanted to accompany Nami on a short walk. They went toward the sea-shore across a sandy hill shaded by a pine grove.

"What wonderful weather! Who could have foreseen it last night?"

"Nobody, really."

"See how near the other shore looks. As if within the range of our voices!"

Wandering along the beach, which was already dry, they passed groups of little boys in search of shells and fishermen who were hurrying to cast their nets in the calm sea. Then they turned toward a part of the shore that was planted with bushes and sought out a solitary spot.

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All at once Nami, as if struck by a sudden thought, asked, "Do you know what Chijiwa is doing at present?"

"Chijiwa! That shameless scoundrel! I never saw him again. But why do you inquire after him?"

For an instant Nami hesitated, then she answered, "You'll laugh at me. I dreamed of him last night."

"Dreamed of him? How's that?"

"He was talking to mamma."

"Why bother your brain with such thoughts? And what was he talking about?"

"I don't remember. But mamma seemed to nod her head continually in agreement with him. Oh, by the way, O-Chizu-san told me that she had seen him lately together with Yamaki. Perhaps that was what made me dream of him. Look, dear,—Chijiwa will never come into our home again, will he?"

"Certainly not. Mamma, too, is angry with him."

A sigh escaped from Nami's lips.

"I can't reconcile myself to the thought that your mother is so angry with me because of my illness."

AT ZUSHI

Takeo felt a shudder ripple over his body. He had not told his dear little invalid that his mother, during the absence of Nami, had waxed even more bitter and advised him continually to keep away from Zushi so as to avoid catching the disease,—nor how she had gone so far as to speak ill of the Kataoka family regarding the sickness of Nami, which disturbed the widow so greatly. And when Takeo had sought to calm his mother she called him a fool, reproving him for disobeying his mother out of love for his wife. . . . This scene had several times been repeated.

“Oh, my little darling, you worry altogether too much! Why should you give it any thought? Gather all your strength so as to recover, and prepare for a nice celebration next spring. Then we’ll go with mamma to Yoshimo and there we’ll watch the cherry trees ripen. There, now we’ve walked quite enough. Are you tired? Shall we return?”

They had reached the foot of a little hill that rose from the shore with a slight slope.

“Let’s go as far as the temple of Fudo.” I’m

² A Buddhist deity, represented by a frightful countenance, and surrounded by flames. In his right hand he holds a sword with which to strike evil spirits, and in the left a rope with which to strangle them.

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not at all tired. I feel so well that I could walk to Europe."

"Really, do you feel well? Perhaps it would be best for you to throw this shawl over your shoulders. . . . The rocky ground is moist, you might slip. . . . Hold firmly to my arm."

Takeo helped Nami climb the narrow, rocky path. From time to time they stopped and at last reached a waterfall, down which there rolled numerous thin, silver streams. Beside the waterfall was the temple of Fudo. A few pines lifted their high trunks above the summit of the slope, and their tops bent over toward the seashore.

Takeo brushed the dust off a block of marble and spread out the shawl for Nami to sit down. He sat down beside her, clasped his knees and exclaimed, "What a peaceful spot!"

The sea, indeed, was very calm. The noon-day sky shone blue and cloudless. The waters, on the surface, glistened with a luminous, resplendent reflection, which did not change under the most patient glance. Earth and sea were at rest, dreaming in the deep quiet of that spring day.

"Listen to me, my love!"

"What is it, Nami-san?"

“Can it be cured?”

“What?”

“My illness.”

“What nonsense are you speaking? Why shouldn't it be cured? Trust me, you will recover. I'll be able to cure you,—I'll take such good care of you!”

Nami let her head sink upon his shoulder.

“It seems to me, that I'll never get better. My mother died from the same disease.”

“Nami-san, why do you talk like this to me today? Why, you're ever so much better. Did you hear what the doctor said? Maybe your mother died of it, but you're not yet twenty and the illness is only in its first stage. You may feel sure of recovery. Don't you remember Okahava,—that relative of ours whose whole right lung was gone and whose doctor held out no hope, and who lived a good fifteen years after that? If your will proves strong enough you will get well beyond a doubt. And if you don't it will be your fault,—because your love for me will have been too weak. If Nami-san loves me, she will surely get well. Tell me: why are you so sad?”

Takeo seized Nami's hand and pressed it passionately to his lips. A diamond sparkled

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on her little finger; it was the one that Takeo had given her.

For a long time both were silent. A white sail appeared, turning the island of Yenoshima, and sped toward them over a sea as smooth as a mirror. On the breeze came the sounds of a merry fishermen's song, far away.

Nami's eyes, shining with repressed tears, seemed to smile, while her lips murmured, "Yes, yes. I will recover. But why should we have to die? I would want to live for a thousand years! Ah, if we must die, why not die together?"

"If you should leave me, you may be sure I could not survive you."

"Really? What a joy to die together! But you have a mother and duties to fulfil. You can't do as you please. I shall go first, and then wait for you. And you will think of me often when I am no longer here? Oh, you *will* do that, won't you?"

And now tears were rolling down his cheeks, too. He caressed Nami's head gently, and whispered to her, "Let's not talk of such sad things. Get better, Nami, and we'll live together for a long, long time. And we'll celebrate our golden wedding!"

AT ZUSHI

She pressed Takeo's hands tightly in her own, let her head fall to his knees, and wept.

"I'll be your wife even beyond this life. Nothing can separate us. Not enemies, not illness, not even death. . . . I am yours, all yours, for eternity without end. . . ."

CHAPTER V

Revenge!

THE smile that came to Chijiwa's lips when, at the Shimbashi station, he learned of Nami's illness, betokened a feeling of exultation. Most unexpectedly he discovered in his grasp the key to a problem that had up to that day given him much laborious thought. The hated families of Kawashima and Kataoka were united through the marriage of Nami to Takeo. Her illness thus offered an opportunity of double vengeance. The dangerous, contagious nature of the disease and the frequent absences of Takeo would favor the success of his machinations. He felt sure that a few words opportunely whispered into the widow's ear regarding her daughter-in-law's illness would produce the desired effect. When the mine, thus prepared, would be touched off, all he would have to do would be to jump quickly to one side, to a point of safety, and then settle back to watch the

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development of the tragedy in which his enemies would writhe in torture and anguish.

Chijiwa's mind felt a perverse delight in the contemplation of his vengeance, and his spirit, for a long time oppressed, began to glow with new ardor in the certainty of his early satisfaction. He knew too well the character of the widow, and knew, also, that she had not been roused to such anger as Takeo's by the recent forgery. He knew, too, that she held Takeo in very little esteem, thinking him still an inexperienced youth, while on the other hand she thought very highly of Chijiwa's shrewdness and clever prudence. And finally he knew that because she had very few relatives, and not even the young couple was living with her, she must feel lonely despite her habitual misanthropy, and therefore inclined to receive courteously those persons who would visit her under such circumstances. Thus it became fairly easy for him to discover in advance just what probability of success awaited his schemes.

First of all the plotter sent Yamaki to the Kawashima house to explore the territory and especially to drop false rumors about the exemplary conduct of Chijiwa, as a token that he had repented of his previous faults.

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One evening, toward the end of April, he was informed that Nami, despite the most assiduous attention, gave no signs of becoming any better and that the antipathy of her mother-in-law toward her was fast changing to hate. Taking advantage of the absence of Takeo and that of the steward Tazaki, who was away on business, he directed himself toward the Kawashima home, which he had not entered for many months. He found his aunt engrossed in deep meditation caused by a letter from Takeo that she still held in her hands.

“No, there are few, if any signs of recovery, despite the immense cost of the treatment,” said the widow. “It’s already more than two months that she’s ill and her health doesn’t improve at all. Honestly, I don’t know what to do or where to turn now. I’d feel a little better if I had at least one person to advise me. You know, Takeo is little more than a boy. . . .”

“Oh, I understand perfectly, dear aunt! I feel that I should not have come here any more, but this matter is such a sad blow to the house of Kawashima that I can’t stand aloof, above all when I think of how kind you, Takeo-san and my late uncle have been to me. It was this

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that caused me to come here today. It's really too bad, dear aunt . . . there is no disease more dangerous than tuberculosis. And you know, it often comes about that the husband catches it because of living with his wife. I even know cases in which an entire family has been stricken with consumption. I'm very much concerned for Takeo; if you don't watch out for him the matter might assume serious proportions. . . ."

"You are right. I myself dwell in great fear and several times I've warned Takeo to keep away from Zushi. But what's the use? He doesn't obey me at all. See, see—" and she pointed to the letter in her hand. "All he speaks of is his wife,—and what the doctor says, and what the nurse is doing, and so on and so forth."

Chijiwa, laughing, interrupted her complaints.

"But, my dear aunt, it can't be otherwise. The love of a husband for his wife can never be too great. Takeo's preoccupation with his wife is worthy of the highest praise."

"Not to my way of thinking. Do you call it right to disobey one's parents because of a wife's illness?"

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Chijiwa sighed.

“How rapidly things have changed! It seems to me only yesterday that Takeo was married, and you were so happy! Today the crucial moment in the fate of the house of Kawashima has arrived! For good or evil! You feel no particular sympathy for Nami’s parents, do you?”

“How could I? What have I ever received from them? I was favored with a more or less formal visit from the proud lady, who brought me an insignificant gift and that’s no token of a very notable deference. We’ve been visited two or three times by the Katos but”

Chijiwa again sighed deeply and said, with an expression of scorn, “In such a circumstance as this, Nami’s parents ought to do something to alleviate our grief! How can they look on so indifferently and abandon that sick woman to our care! The world is too selfish . . . That’s all!”

“Without a doubt.”

“But Takeo’s health must be our first concern. If what we fear should ever come about it is the end of the house of Kawashima! The disease can show up at any time. What’s

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to be done? Nothing. Since they're man and wife it's impossible to separate them. . . ."

"That is so. It's impossible."

"But it's the duty of parents sometimes to take their children off the paths that they have chosen. Often the punishment is inflicted exclusively for the future good of the children themselves. Even if the children at first seem to give themselves up to despair, after a time they become reasonable and change their minds. . . ."

"That, too, is very true."

"The glorious name of Kawashima must not be permitted to die out, merely because of a hesitation to interfere with a love affair or through pity for a weak creature!"

"It most certainly must not!"

"And then, if they were to have a child . . . it would be the end. . . ."

"Naturally."

When Chijiwa saw that his aunt made no opposition whatever to his arguments and insinuations he exulted in his evil heart and soon changed the topic of conversation. He promised himself, however, to cultivate quickly and carefully the poisonous seeds he had planted in the widow's heart, so that he might

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soon behold the fruits of destruction and death. And he knew that the time of the harvest was not far away.

Takeo's mother was not in herself so wicked as to hate Nami for any exclusively personal reason. She really took account of Nami's willing attempts to please her mother-in-law, and despite the difference in their breeding and their ideas, she could not help being pleased at certain similarities of tastes and thoughts. She even confessed in the depths of her own heart,—although she took great care lest anyone else should read her confession,—that in her own youthful days she had been far from equalling Nami's sweet character. But when, after two months of her daughter-in-law's illness, she began to be convinced that Nami was a victim of a terrible plague, she was seized with the fear that the disease could spread its fatal consequences to others; and when she saw clearly that, despite all the money and care expended upon the young wife, there was no hope of an early recovery, a strange feeling of disillusion and antipathy rose in her soul. She herself was unaware of the rapid development of that sense of aversion which became deeper and deeper as the days went by. And while that

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feeling grew, as a result of the worries incident to the illness, her natural reserve broke down and her hatred developed with the utmost violence.

Chijiwa, on his side, watched closely the gradual progress of the evil in the widow's heart, and in his renewed visits he tried to press her, directing her ideas toward a definite conflict.

By the time that Chijiwa's frequent visits to the Kawashima home during Takeo's absence had begun to appear strange, the plotter had already put into operation the greater part of his perfidious plan, and already complacently called himself, together with Yamaki, the author of the drama upon which the curtain was soon to rise.

CHAPTER VI

Mother and Son

DURING the first days of June the vessel to which Takeo had been assigned received orders to sail from Kure to Saseho, from which point they were to leave for the North to take part in the naval maneuvers of the squadron, which was to assemble in the sea of Hakodate. Because he would be gone for a month he went one night to his home to take leave of his mother. For some time the widow had been very angry with Takeo. There was no doubt that someone had been whispering things into her ear.

On this evening, however, she received Takeo with unwonted cordiality and warmth, and although as a rule he was indifferent to small attentions, he nevertheless felt a certain embarrassment at this unaccustomed tenderness on his mother's part.

Every son, even after he has grown up, feels happy in the thought that he is loved by his mother. Takeo was all the more sensitive to

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such manifestations of affection after the harshness of recent months.

After a frugal supper he allowed his thoughts to return to Nami, and while he was taking his bath, feeling the large drops fall upon him thick and fast, his mind went back to his visit to Zushi during the terrible storm.

Then he dreamed of the happy day when Nami, completely recovered, would return to his home. . . . And he prayed for the speedy coming of that day with a passionate supplication in his heart.

Refreshed by the bath, and wrapped in a comfortable kimono he went back to his mother's room, and rubbed his forehead with the palm of his right hand, while his lips pressed the end of a lighted cigar.

The widow was smoking a thin, long pipe, while a servant was massaging her back. She raised her glance and said, "Are you ready so quickly? You remind me of your father. That's how he used to come back from his bath. Sit down on this cushion here, will you? Good, Matsu, that's enough. Now go and prepare some tea."

Madame Kawashima arose and took a plate of cakes from the table.

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"Mamma, you're showering me with attentions, as if I were a guest," observed Takeo, laughing and flicking the ashes off his cigar.

"Takeo, you come at just the right time. I have something to talk over with you, and I've been hoping for some time that you'd come. Today you were in Zushi?"

Takeo knew that his mother disapproved of his frequent visits to his wife, but it was impossible to hold them secret.

"Yes. I stopped for a little while. It seems she's better. She feels so bad at the thought of giving you trouble!"

"Really, does that make her feel bad?"

She scrutinized her son's face sharply and uneasily.

Meanwhile the tea was served. The widow turned to the girl who had brought it, saying, "We don't need you for anything else, Matsu. Shut the door tight."

Then she placed a little sugar in her cup and in that of Takeo, and after having swallowed the steaming liquid at a single gulp she grasped her long pipe, lighted it and put it between her lips.

"I'm suffering from my rheumatism again. Lately it's become very serious. Yesterday I

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visited your father's tomb and my joints ache yet. I feel that I've got one foot in the grave already! At least you, Takeo, had better take good care of your health."

Takeo shook the ashes from his cigar and looked at his mother, who, despite her fleshy countenance, had very few wrinkles on her forehead.

"I'm always away and there's nobody near you to take care of the house. How I wish that Nami would recover, and return to help you! That's what she herself is always saying!"

"I believe that. But I'm afraid of tuberculosis."

"But she's getting better now. The warm weather is coming and then she's very young and the disease can't develop any further."

"Even if she is getting better, we can't count on a rapid recovery, Takeo. I learned from the physician that her mother died of the same disease. . . ."

"That's true. She told me so herself. But. . . ."

"Consumption is hereditary, isn't it?"

"So they say, but Nami fell ill as the result of a very bad cold. Everything depends upon the care she receives. People speak of

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epidemics and heredity, when very often the real cause lies elsewhere. You know how strong Nami's father is, and what a healthy young girl Nami's sister is. Certainly O-Koma-san shows no disposition toward the disease. We're not at all so weak and delicate as the physicians would like to have us. . . ."

Takeo laughed.

"It's no laughing matter. . . ."

She emptied her pipe by striking it against her open palm, and resumed.

"I hold that tuberculosis is the worst of all diseases. Takeo, you know Governor Togo's family. The mother of the boy with whom you often exchanged blows in your childhood quarrels died of consumption two years ago. Togo-san himself died about six months later, of the same disease. You knew that, didn't you? Well, the son, employed in some city or other by the government, as an engineer, died several days ago, also of consumption. All of this comes from the illness of a single person in the family. I could tell you other similar cases. Therefore I beg you, my dear Takeo, take care. Unless we exercise the utmost caution we'll be unable to avoid the most grievous consequences."

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The widow laid aside her pipe and leaned forward, as if to scrutinize more closely the face of Takeo, who heard her in silence. Then she continued. "I have something on my mind that I must tell you, Takeo." A light shudder went through her body, then, looking directly at him she said, "You know, Nami. . . ."

He raised his glance.

"What would you say to having Nami recalled?"

"Recalled? What do you mean?"

"Yes. If she were recalled to the house of her parents?"

"Her parents? Would you want them to take care of her during her illness?"

"Certainly,—and they ought to think of that themselves. In any case you should be pleased to have them recall her."

"I don't understand you. Zushi seems to me the very place for her. At the Kataokas they have children. If you really want her to return to Tokyo it would be far better if she were to come here with us."

The mother slowly sipped another cup of tea, which in the meantime had become cold; then she said, in a trembling voice. "Takeo, you're not drunk. Then why do you pretend

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not to understand me?" And looking sharply at him, she added, "I mean this: we must send Nami back to the house of her parents!"

"Send her back? Send her back? Do you mean that she and I must separate?"

"Softly, Takeo. Don't speak so loudly!" And looking straight at her son, who was trembling convulsively, she continued, "Separation? Very well. Call it that if you wish. . . ."

"Divorce? But why?"

"You ask me why? Because of what I've just told you. Because of the dangerous nature of the disease."

"And so, because of her illness,—you'd want me to divorce Nami?"

"Precisely. Despite its being very painful to me, too."

"Divorce!"

The cigar fell from Takeo's hand into the fireplace, where it scattered a shower of sparks. The lamp hissed, and the rain of the stormy night seemed to beat with greater fury against the windows.

The widow covered the smouldering cigar with ashes and resumed her talk with the calm and even tone of one who is intent upon persuasion.

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"I'm not at all surprised that you should be shocked at the first hearing of this thought. You were unprepared for it; but I have been thinking about it for many days, and you, in turn, must give lengthy consideration to what I have said. I have nothing against Nami; there isn't anything in her that displeases me in any particular way, and besides, you love her. For this reason it is heartbreaking for me to have to advise you to divorce her. You may say what you wish, but the dangerous nature of the disease. . . ."

"But I tell you that she's now on the road to recovery!" exclaimed Takeo impetuously while his glance rested upon his mother with an expression of anguish.

"Hear what I tell you. It may be that for the moment the illness does not grow more serious, but I have heard from doctors that this disease takes a sudden change for the worse after every ephemeral improvement. A change of temperature can lead to a relapse. Nobody is ever completely cured of consumption; that's what the physicians say. Nami, for the moment, is not seriously ill, but just the same she'll keep on failing and in the end you, too, will catch it. If you have a child it will inherit

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the maternal disease. Think not only of Nami, but of yourself, head of a family, and of your child the heir to your name and property all all dying of consumption. . . . The house of Kawashima being extinguished! Can you endure the idea of a house whose power has been established by the hard work of your father, of a house that has enjoyed the special favor of the Mikado, being ruined when you die? Nami is much to be pitied,—there's no doubt of that. You, too, will suffer greatly. I myself, as your mother, propose this way out with great reluctance and with a broken heart. But you must measure the things that are at stake and reflect upon the harm that may come to our house through Nami. Certainly she is to be pitied,—but the thought of you,—the head of a family, makes resistance necessary in this sad crisis. You must subject your feelings to the dictates of reason and do what I've advised. Don't forget all that you owe to your house."

Takeo had listened in silence. Before his mind appeared, as clear as the light of the sun, the figure of Nami as he had left her that morning.

"Mother, I can't do such a cruel thing!"

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“What?” Her voice sounded somewhat harsh and loud.

“If we ever did that, Nami would die.”

“Well, since it’s her lot to die anyway. . . . But Takeo, remember that I’m suffering anxiety for *your* life. And I’m worried for the future of the Kawashimas.”

“Mother, if you’re thinking of me, you must feel as I do. No, I could never bring myself to do anything so inhuman. Under no circumstances. She is still very young and can’t be of very much help to you, but she loves you even as I do. And how can I divorce an innocent wife merely because she’s ill? That’s no reason. And why is it impossible for consumption to be cured? Nami is getting along finely. And if she is destined to die of it, she’ll die as my wife! The disease is catching, you say? I’ll take the utmost precaution and will do all you advise in that regard,—all except separate from her. That I cannot do, not for anything in the world. I cannot!”

“Fie! You speak only of Nami and think nothing of your own life or of the future of the Kawashimas.”

“And you, on the other hand, think only of *my* life. But what use could there be to an

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existence woven of cruelty and dishonorable deeds? Injustice and cruelty have never brought prosperity to a family. A divorce from Nami would certainly not add to the honor and the nobility of the Kawashima. No, I cannot separate from her. Never! Never!"

Although the widow was prepared to encounter a certain amount of resistance from Takeo, she was overcome by the firmness and the resolution he displayed, and her anger was roused to a high pitch. The veins of her forehead swelled, her temples throbbed violently, and the hand in which she held her pipe quivered several times. She was struggling to stifle her rage and even tried to smile as she spoke.

"Come, now. Don't get so excited. Think it over calmly. You are young and don't know the world. But you've heard the proverb: Save the large animal by sacrificing the small. Well, Nami is now the small animal. The house of Kawashima—*we* are the large animal. I pity Nami, and her parents, too, but can they expect us to fall ill of their own disease and to sacrifice the existence of the Kawashimas to an unjustifiable feeling of compassion? And even if she and her parents were to condemn us,—such a thing would be preferable to the

ruin of our house. You speak of injustice,—of cruelty,—but you can find cases like ours on every side. It is just to separate from one's wife when she does not help to increase the honor of the family; it is just when she is barren or is stricken by a dangerous disease. That's what the public opinion says, isn't it? The teachings of tradition are above discussion. In a case such as the present the parents themselves ought to come of their own accord to take back their daughter. And since they don't see fit to do so, what is there wrong in making them understand where their duty lies?"

"Public opinion! Tradition!" he retorted. But we have no right to do wrong just because others do it. Separate because of illness! That's the brutal custom of an epoch that is fortunately past! And even if this were an accepted principle today, it would merit nothing but contempt. We are not obliged to follow the standards of an ancient and inhuman custom. You think only of our family. But what will the Kataoka family say when they see that a daughter has been sent back to them almost immediately after she has left them? And on account of illness! And then, how can Nami return there without falling a prey to the

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blackest despair? Just imagine that *I* was ill with lung trouble, and that they were to take Nami away from me because tuberculosis is catching! How does such an idea strike you? Well? Isn't it the same thing?"

"No, it's very much different. Woman is inferior to man."

"Let it be as you say! But as far as the life of feelings goes, she is not his inferior! Let us examine matters from this more practical point of view, I beg you. Nami, in recent days, has had no violent attacks and now she's recovering. If I were to follow your advice, without a doubt I should be the cause of a relapse. Can you take such a burden upon your conscience? Could you do that toward a stranger,—let alone your own son's wife? Can't you see that it would be *I* who was killing Nami?"

Takeo sobbed. His tears, beyond his control, scalded his cheeks and fell upon the mat at his feet.

The widow arose impetuously and from a shrine brought forth an *ihai* or wooden tablet, upon which was inscribed a Buddhistic name. Then, evoking the spirit of her dead husband she turned to her son, saying, "Takeo, hear

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me. You may pay little heed to my command; but dare to repeat the words you have spoken before the spirit of your father! Repeat them, if you dare! The spirits of your ancestors are listening to you! Repeat them, rebellious son!”

She looked intently at Takeo and repeatedly struck her pipe against the edge of the fireplace. He, who was usually indulgent and patient with his mother, grew red with anger and with difficulty restrained himself.

“What, mamma? You call me rebellious?”

“And isn’t that just what you are? Isn’t it rebellion when, because of your wife you scorn the words of your mother? Isn’t it disobedience to squander the life that I gave you with pain and have preserved at the cost of countless sacrifices? Isn’t it rebellion when you lead a house to ruin despite my commandments and my prayers? You are a disobedient son and trample upon your most sacred duties!”

“But, dear mother, humanity.”

“Enough of that word ‘humanity’. You place your wife before your parents! Fool! You think only of your wife and forget your first family! Wretch! You speak only of Nami! But we will curse you!”

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Takeo bit his lips and large tears fell from his eyes.

“Mother! Don’t be so cruel!”

“Cruel?”

“I never spoke that word till just now. But today you don’t seem to understand me at all.”

“Why don’t you obey me and consent to separation from Nami?”

“This”

“No hesitating! Takeo, hear me: you must choose between your wife and your mother! Do you choose Nami? Do you place her before me? Ah, you wretch!”

In a rage she struck the edge of the fireplace with her pipe, which was shattered to fragments. Some pieces struck violently against the opposite wall.

At the same moment behind the screen there was heard a stifled exclamation and immediately a trembling voice asked, “May I come in?”

“Who is it? What’s it about?”

“A telegram.”

In two seconds Takeo had torn away the thin envelope and had read the dispatch. The girl disappeared at once, frightened by the angry, dark look of her mistress. But in that short instant the widow’s anger began to cool off and

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mother and son sat down opposite each other in silence.

The rain was falling in torrents.

At last the woman resumed the conversation; her eyes still preserved an expression of anger, but her words did not sound so harsh as before.

“Takeo, really, I have only your good in mind when I insist upon a separation. You are my only child, and my only consolation is to see you forge ahead courageously, a sound, healthy man, with a sturdy family.”

Takeo, who had sunk into a deep reverie, raised his head, and pointing to the telegram, said, “I have just received orders to leave at once. By tomorrow morning at the latest I must start out. I’ll not return sooner than a month or thereabouts. In the meanwhile you will do nothing, and will take care that Nami learns nothing. Wait till I come back.”

The following morning Takeo made his mother repeat the promise not to take, in his absence, any steps toward effecting a separation, and the widow assured him that she would mention the subject to nobody. He left for the doctor’s, to ask him to take special care of

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Nami; he then hastened to Zushi by the afternoon train.

When he got off, at the station, the sun was setting and soon the sickle of the crescent moon could be faintly discerned against the golden sky. Takeo crossed the little bridge over the stream and took a path that passed through a wood which was already invaded by the twilight.

When the road broadened into the familiar little valley, and he could make out from afar the outline of the well and the pail that hung from its place, the sound of a harp came to his ears.

"It's Nami playing," thought Takeo, and it seemed that his heart must break. He paused for several instants at the threshold, drying his tears.

Nami was feeling much stronger and was seeking relief from the anxious waiting in the sad notes of the instrument.

At once she noticed that something was weighing upon Takeo's spirits, but he tried to evade her questions and said that he was tired from not having fallen asleep until a very late hour.

They sat down close together, to the supper

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that was always ready, as if the master were expected every night; but Nami could not bring a morsel to her mouth. Courageously she tried to hide her anxiety with a forced smile. When the time for the last train to leave had arrived, she was still busy sewing buttons on his coat and brushing his cloak. Takeo could stay no longer and rose to go.

Nami clung to his arm and asked, in a broken voice, "Is it already time for you to leave us, my love?"

"I'll return soon, my darling. I beg you, be prudent and take good care of your health."

Their hands had joined in a convulsive grasp.

At the door old Iku helped him put on his shoes and Mokei approached with a lantern in his hand, ready to accompany his master to the station and to carry his traveling bag.

"Good Iku, I'm entrusting my Nami to your care . . . Nami-san, I'm going."

"Come back soon, I beg you."

Takeo nodded. He walked about a dozen steps forward by the uncertain light of the lantern, then turned around.

Nami was erect on the threshold, motionless.

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Her shoulders were covered with a white shawl. She was waving a handkerchief.

“Come back soon!”

“Yes, Nami-san. You’ll catch cold. . . . Go inside, please!”

But the white form could still be made out against the obscure background when he turned around for a second time, and a third. . . . Then the road suddenly plunged into darkness and the white apparition disappeared before his anxious glance. But for the third time came the weak sound of a voice imploring through tears, “Come back soon!”

Far off, almost upon the edge of the horizon, he saw the round curve of the sickle-shaped moon appear and disappear behind the tops of the pines. . . .

CHAPTER VII

The Candidate for Nami's Place

THE loud shout of the man who was pulling the *kuruma* rapidly along announced to the Yamaki household the arrival of the master.

After he had taken his bath, he sank down upon a white cushion, with his legs crossed in the manner of tailors, turning his shoulders to the little alcove in which some early irises were blossoming in an earthen vase. His look was that of a man who is content and completely master of himself.

Dinner was brought. He quickly drank some saké and cast toward the servant woman who was waiting upon him a look expressive of happiness and self-satisfaction at his skill in settling affairs.

A servant girl entered with some newspapers.

"Well, what's the news in Korea? The ultimatum. . . . What's that? China is hurrying troops? Is it possible? Japan will certainly send some of hers. War looks inevitable. A

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good chance to make money. . . . Come, O-Suma, you must drink, too, in celebration of the great event."

"Will there really be war?"

"Looks that way. Fine, isn't it? Listen, O-Sumi, I've got some more good news for you. I saw Chijiwa a little while ago, and he tells me that the affair is rapidly approaching a solution."

"It's decided, then? Does Takeo consent?"

"Takeo? He's still absent and they can't win his consent anyway. But O-Nami-san had a new hemorrhage and the widow has given up her last hope, and has made up her mind to complete the matter during Takeo's absence. That's what will undoubtedly happen if Chijiwa continues to press her. It would be rather difficult to effect this plan if Takeo were here, so the widow can't wait until it's accomplished. . . . Now everything will go as we wish. And now, Your Highness, exult!"

"O-Nami-san is to be pitied!"

"You're certainly queer! When you were overwhelmed with pity for O-Toyo your one desire was to get rid of Nami-san, and now that circumstances favor us you feel compassion for Nami-san. Don't think of such things!

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Think rather of how to make O-Toyo take Nami's place."

"But I'm afraid Takeo, when he finds that Nami has been taken from him during his absence, will fly into a fury."

"Very possibly. But what's the use of the anger when the thing's already done? And after all, Takeo is an obedient young fellow. When the widow will weep, he'll try to hush up the matter; I'm sure of that. And now things are going from good to better. Let's talk about more important affairs. About Mademoiselle O-Toyo. . . . We'll wait until Takeo's excitement has calmed down entirely. Then we'll send O-Toyo to the widow,—whether she's invited or not,—under the pretext of having her learn good manners there. Naturally we'll pay for her maintenance and everything else. It won't be at all so difficult as it appears. Everything depends upon the widow's good humor. When O-Toyo will be Baroness Kawashima, thus fulfilling her dearest wishes, then Takeo's father-in-law will take charge of the affairs of the house. For Takeo is but a boy. That will be excellent, really. But now let's think only of O-Toyo."

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“Will you have a little rice?”

“Never mind. This is really a day of double celebration. O-Toyo’s marriage and my assuming charge of the Kawashima affairs. You ought to take care of her education; you’re forgetting to teach her how to run a home. O-Toyo will never know how to perform her duties. This continual indolence and her wild behavior would discourage any mother-in-law, even the goddess Kwannon.”¹

“Yes, but I can’t educate her as I should like. . . . You’re always saying. . . .”

“Enough. I hate these excuses. . . . Actions speak louder than words. I’ll show you how to educate O-Toyo!”

“Mademoiselle, your father desires to see you!”

Toyo slowly turned at the sound of the girl’s voice. She was finishing her evening toilette and could not part with her mirror.

“Very well. A moment.” She smoothed her hair and asked, “Také, does everything seem all right?”

“Everything. How beautiful the mademoiselle looks!”

¹ Goddess of pity and mercy.

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"Thanks."

She looked once more into the glass and smiled.

Také removed Toyo's dressing gown, while she repeated in a meek, but warning tone.

"Your father is waiting for you."

"Yes, yes. I'm coming."

She cast a long, farewell glance into the mirror and rapidly crossed the rooms that led to her father's study.

"You kept us waiting, O-Toyo. Come here. Have mamma sit down and prepare to serve. Fill my goblet. See here. Don't empty the pitcher by turning it over suddenly. You don't know how to serve saké yet. That's it! That's the way! Gracefully!"

Yamaki, whose brains were beginning to be befogged by his copious libations, continued to drink despite his wife's advice, and observed, "O-Toyo looks very beautiful when her hair is done up well. Like now. Isn't that so, O-Sumi? Her complexion is perfect."

Toyo smiled proudly and her body soon assumed the outline of the letter S.

"She is as graceful in appearance as she is genteel in speech when she's in good humor.

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Only her front teeth project too far, like her mother's."

"Hush! Hyozo!"

O-Sumi frowned. Toyo assumed a bitter-sweet expression.

"Raise the corners of your eyes just a third of an inch and your face will become enchanting!"

"Hyozo! What are you saying!"

O-Sumi tried to dam the flood of her husband's comments, but it was a vain effort.

"Look! Look! Why are you so angry, O-Toyo? That doesn't favor the expression of your face. Don't look so savagely. See, see, I bring you good news. Pour me out another beaker for my pains, and I'll tell you the secret." He emptied the beaker, which she had filled to the brim, and began with a silly laugh, "We were just talking about Takeo-san."

Like a horse, who, for a long time accustomed to a wretched, almost empty stall, suddenly perceives the odor of hay mown in the springtime, and is shocked out of his weakness, so O-Toyo was shocked and cocked her ear.

"You scratched out the picture of O-Nami, and your conjuration worked wonderfully."

"Hyozo!"

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Madame O-Sumi knit her eyebrows for the third time.

“Now let's come to the point. O-Nami-san is very ill, and therefore she's going to be separated from Takeo-san. The matter, at present, is not known to her parents; Nami-san herself knows nothing about it. But it will all take place shortly. Now the difficulty lies in finding a person to take Nami's place. And here is the main idea. Your mother and I want to see you take the place that Nami-san held. . . . That can't happen all of a sudden, so that at first we're going to send you to Madame Kawashima to be educated. . . . Wait, now. Don't be so astonished. We're going to send you as a—candidate. Understand me? This is the chief point.”

He paused for breath and then, eyeing his wife and his daughter with a wily glance, he resumed.

“That's the chief point, O-Toyo. Although it may be premature, I want to impress it upon your mind from the very start. As you know, the mother of Takeo-san is widely noted for her obstinate, selfish, fussy character. Oh, I beg your pardon! I forgot that she's going to be your mother-in-law! For the rest, she's cer-

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tainly not an amiable woman, like your own mother, for example! Your future mother-in-law is neither a serpent nor a devil; she's a human being. And by using a great deal of tact, you could easily become the daughter-in-law even of a she-devil or a monster. If I were only a woman I'll bet that I'd have widow Kawashima as soft as mush,—and not only her, but even a worse witch. My skill can't serve you, but it can teach you to act with cunning. Pay good heed to what I tell you, O-Toyo. When you will be situated in that house as her aide,—that is, as a candidate for marriage,—(that's a secret, of course), you mustn't be as lazy as you are now. You must get up early in the morning,—you know that old folks like her are early risers,—and you must put all her things in order, even to the exclusion of other matters. And you mustn't be so touchy as you are now. You must always appear meek, understand? You must submit even when she scolds you bitterly, and must humiliate yourself when she orders you to do something unreasonable. You must give in even if you're right. If you'll do as I say she'll insist that you never leave her. That is the sense in which you must understand the proverb: 'In defeat

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lies half the victory.' You mustn't be cross, do you hear? In the third place, and this may be a little premature, but I tell it to you now because this is a good opportunity; in the third place, suppose that you have already married him. You musn't let it appear that you're too happy with him. Naturally it makes no difference to me how you act toward him when you are alone with each other. . . . But what I want to impress upon you is that you have a care about the opinions of outsiders. Moreover, you must be very affable toward your mother-in-law, but you must act a trifle proud toward your husband, and it wouldn't be so bad if you'd give him a little lesson occasionally in the presence of his mother. A mother should be very happy to find that her son is very much loved by his wife, but it's strange it isn't usually that way. It's a matter of jealousy or of pure selfishness. Besides, if you become too fond of your husband, there's a danger of slighting your mother-in-law,—or at least, she'll think you're slighting her. . . . O-Nami-san, from the looks of things, committed this very error, showing her great love for Takeo too plainly. The differences between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law often arise from the

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fact that the mother is left to herself while the young couple is too happy. So that you want to make it a point to remember your mother-in-law. In a short time the old lady will go to her rest and then for my part you can go out walking with your arms about Takeo's neck! But in the presence of your mother-in-law you mustn't make eyes at him. I'll have plenty more advice to give you, but that can wait for later. Meanwhile let the three rules I've laid down for you suffice. In order to become the wife of your darling Takeo you'll have to learn to master yourself. Let your apprenticeship begin from this moment."

As he spoke the maid Také entered the room.

"An answer is expected," she said, handing the head of the house an envelope addressed in a feminine handwriting.

No sooner had Yamaki broken the seal and cast his eye across the letter than he waved it before the eyes of his wife and his daughter.

"There! Read that! The widow Kawashima asks to see me directly!"

Two weeks after Takeo had left for the naval maneuvers and several days before the note written by the widow to Yamaki, Nami had suffered another hemorrhage. The physician

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was urgently summoned and fortunately the attack was a light one, but it was serious enough for the widow to decide to carry out her plans at once.

A day or two later the widow Kawashima, who rarely left her house, might have been seen making her way to the home of the Katos on Iida street.

On the evening in which she had spoken of the eventual divorce from Takeo, the latter had opposed such strong resistance that the widow had been forced to promise to delay all decision until his return.

She felt a great doubt that he would follow her advice, fearing, on the contrary, that his love for Nami would increase during his grievous absence and that upon his return he would be less disposed than ever to agree with her suggestions; or perhaps in the meantime something would happen to spoil her plans.

For these reasons she thought it better to act while Takeo was away.

She could not completely stifle remorse at betraying the promise she had allowed him to wrest from her, it is true, and it was this feel-

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ing that had caused her delay, despite Chi-jiwa's urgent solicitations.

The new hemorrhage of Nami's, however, was the last straw; the widow made up her mind to visit the Katos, who had been the intermediaries in the marriage of Takeo to Nami.

The Katos did not live far away. The home of the Kawashimas was as near to Iida street as the nose is to the eyes on the human face. Yet the widow had set foot in the viscountess's home but once,—after the marriage of Takeo to Nami, on a mere visit of thanks to the intermediaries.

Her coming, therefore, awoke apprehension on the part of Madame Kato, who at once suspected a disagreeable piece of news.

She received the widow very politely. But when she learned the motive of the call her courage ebbed as if the news had pierced her heart. She had never supposed that the same hands which had tied the knot between the Kataoka and the Kawashima families would be asked to sever it!

Madame Kato was bewildered and intensely surprised to see with what impudence the old woman had come to her and spoken her inhuman words without a blush! Indeed, the

widow preserved an upright, dignified behavior, sitting with her robust body erect and with her hands upon her knees. She was very evidently speaking in all seriousness, with absolute conviction. The viscountess at last was forced to break the silence and respond to the widow's proposal.

It was the widow Kawashima's turn to be surprised and angered, for the rage aroused in Madame Kato by the old woman's words found free vent in burning phrases, which fell from the speaker's lips like whip-strokes, lashing the malice and egotism of the mother-in-law.

Suddenly, while she was uttering these words under the influence of a violent emotion, the great affection that she felt for Nami, whom she had been accustomed to looking upon as her second daughter, illuminated her mind, showing her that her rebuke might bring even greater harm to the unhappy girl.

With great effort she succeeded in mastering her fury and asked the other woman to explain to her clearly the reasons that could justify her demand for a separation, and with sharp logic she sought, with a calmness born of the intense scorn she felt, to combat the arguments advanced by the widow Kawashima.

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She tried to imagine herself in the widow's place, and forced herself to express sympathy, and finally begged indulgence.

But these entreaties found no response in the widow's heart. Her look revealed the disdain she felt for such fruitless discussion; at length she said plainly that the only thing left was to transmit the message to Nami's parents.

As she listened to the woman's cruel words Madame Kato summoned to her mind the image of sick Nami . . . she recalled the death of her own sister, Nami's mother, and the thought of the anguish that the general would feel for his daughter's misfortune tugged at her heart.

The thought increased her bitterness and tears were now falling from her eyes. Madame Kato, summoning all her courage, expressed her scorn anew in biting words. "My husband and I had the honor of uniting the two families. But as to committing the infamy that you ask of us, we refuse absolutely to disgrace ourselves by being parties to the perpetration of so unjust and inhuman a project."

The widow left in a rage, and that very night she wrote to Yamaki, for she feared that the upright Tazaki was not wily enough for such a trying task. On her side Madame Kato was

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furious, and could come to no decision in the absence of her husband.

Nevertheless, with the aid of Chizu she sought to discover where Takeo's vessel was at present situated and wrote him an urgent letter, telling him of the danger that had arisen during his absence to threaten his domestic happiness.

This she did because, despite the widow's insinuations, she did not believe that Takeo was in accord with the plan of divorce, and maintained that the affair was being prosecuted without his knowledge.

Meanwhile the widow had decided to address her demand for a divorce directly to Nami's parents. This is what she had entrusted to Yamaki, whose *kuruma* was now rolling towards the Kataoka home.

CHAPTER VIII

Yamaki's Talk with the General

YAMAKI'S *kuruma* arrived before the general's door at the very moment in which an officer of proud and haughty mien appeared, mounted on his horse.

At the sound of the *kuruma* that passed rapidly by him the horse was frightened and arose on his hind legs. The officer checked him, holding the reins in a powerful grasp, so that the animal jumped a few more paces, while his bit was covered with foam. Then brusquely the officer spurred him on to a full gallop.

Yamaki, surprised and struck at the sight of the imposing officer, brushed the dust from his clothes and timidly approached the magnificent main entrance.

He was accustomed to visiting the homes of government officials on matters connected with his business, yet never before had he felt such a consciousness of his inferiority.

The night before, too, when the widow had charged him with this message, he had felt

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something akin to this same strange emotion. But now, face to face with the moment of carrying out his mission, he himself was surprised at his weakness of spirit, which he had been used to consider as cold and impassive as bronze.

He sent in his card, and the servant, returning, led him into the general's reception room. On the table was spread out a map representing China and Korea. Several matches and a heap of cigar ashes indicated that somebody had lately been working nearby.

Indeed, the uprising in Korea, the movement of Chinese troops, the rumor,—rapidly gaining credence,—that a Japanese expedition had been sent thither, had aroused the entire world, and although General Kataoka was in the reserve army, all these matters so occupied his time and attention that for the present he was forced to renounce even his daily lesson in English.

Yamaki sat looking inquisitively about him. After several moments he heard footsteps that sounded like claps of thunder and a man as massive as a mountain entered the room, stopping before Yamaki.

The latter, upon the appearance of the

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general, had bounced to his feet so violently that the chair had been overturned. Murmuring phrases of excuse he lifted it up, and then, in utter embarrassment, bowed repeatedly before the general.

"I pray you, be seated. You are Yamaki? I knew your name, but—"

"I am exceedingly honored to make the acquaintance of the general. I am Hyozo Yamaki," said the visitor, in the tone of one who wishes to show respect and deference. "Pardon my awkwardness. I hope I may merit your good graces."

After each phrase he made a low, awkward bow, and his chair would creak most disconcertingly. And when he said "Pardon my awkwardness" the creaking of the chair seemed to say, "You certainly are awkward, my boy!"

There ensued several insignificant phrases about various subjects, and on the probability of war in Korea, and then the general formally inquired as to the purpose of Yamaki's visit.

Yamaki brushed the dust off his clothes ostentatiously, trying to open his lips. Three times he made the same attempt, surprised and angered that his words, usually so ready to

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flow from his tongue, should now remain stuck in his throat.

At last he found speech.

"I come on behalf of the Kawashima family, with reference to a certain matter. . . ."

The general raised an astounded countenance to Yamaki's glance.

"Well?"

"Madame Kawashima would have come herself . . . but she asked me to represent her."

"I don't understand."

Yamaki passed his hand across his forehead, but despite this precaution the beads of perspiration ran down his face.

"She wanted to have Viscountess Kato come in her place," he continued, "but since that lady declined the invitation, I was chosen—"

"Well. And to what purpose?"

"It concerns . . . I am pained and grieved to have to communicate it to you . . . but Madame Kawashima . . . your worthy daughter. . . ."

The general frowned and raised his eyes directly to Yamaki's own, not removing his glance.

"Well, and then?"

"It concerns the young baroness. We hesitate to say it,—but we are very much disturbed

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because of her prolonged illness, as you know, and although it is now improving, which is a cause of great pleasure to us. . . .”

“Continue.”

“We are deeply grieved that we are forced to speak these things, but since her disease is of a dangerous nature, and since the Kawashima family is small. . . . As Your Excellency knows, the present head of the family, Takeo-san, is the sole remaining male descendant. Therefore the widow is very uneasy as regards him. We are very sorry to say it, but since her illness is of an epidemical nature, if Takeo were to—, but no, there is no probability that this sad case should befall,—and yet, it is better to look ahead. . . . If, perchance, Takeo, the head of the family, should fall ill, then the extinction of the Kawashima family would be decreed. We know very well that today the matter does not look very important. To tell the truth,—and it’s very painful for me to have to say it but the nature of the disease is such that. . . .”

Yamaki continued to entangle himself. Large drops of perspiration rolled down from his forehead while he stammered worse than ever as his talk proceeded.

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The general, who watched him with unaltered calm, at last raised his right hand.

"Very well. I have understood you perfectly. Summing it up: Because Nami's illness is dangerous, you want me to take her back? You see, I've understood exactly."

He placed his cigar upon the ash-tray and crossed his arms. He looked like one who has at last emerged from an embarrassing situation.

Yamaki breathed with relief, but furrowed his forehead as he said, "You understand me very well, Sir General, and it is with deep grief that I have fulfilled this mission. . . . I hope that you will not interpret ill my . . ."

"Has Takeo yet returned?"

"No, not yet. Naturally, however, he is informed about everything."

"Very well."

The general nodded assent, then closed his eyes for several instants, remaining motionless, with his arms crossed. Yamaki's face betrayed his satisfaction. . . . The enterprise had been consummated without any great difficulty, so that now he could gaze upon the general calmly as he shut his eyes and pressed his lips. But even then he felt in the behavior of his host an indefinable something that inspired respect.

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“Yamaki-kun. . . .”

The general opened his eyes and looked straight into Yamaki's eyes.

“I suppose that you have children, haven't you?” he inquired.

Yamaki, who could not guess the general's purpose in asking such a question, bowed.

“Yes, sir. A son and a daughter.”

“Yamaki-kun, you know how much a father can love his children?”

“Certainly.”

“Very well. . . . And now, reverting to your request, I beg you to communicate to the widow Kawashima the assurance that she may rest easy. Nami shall be sent for this very day. I am sorry to give you any trouble in this matter.”

Yamaki saluted the general by bowing slightly some seven or eight times in succession. Was it from compassion, and was he asking forgiveness for the trouble he had caused, or was it from satisfaction at having brought the affair to so successful a conclusion? Who can tell?

The general accompanied Yamaki to the vestibule; then he went back to his study and locked himself in.

CHAPTER IX

Nami Returns to Her Father's Home

AFTER the departure of Takeo, Nami felt abandoned. . . . Days seemed centuries, but long as they were they dragged by, and now more than a month had passed. The harvest had been gathered and it was already the wild lily season.

At times Nami lost all hope of recovery, but fortunately her physician succeeded in instilling the belief of a continuous improvement, and she regained her courage.

Cheered by a letter lately received from Takeo, who was at Hakodate, she tried to follow scrupulously the advice of her doctor, and to await with utmost patience the return of her husband. "Ah," she thought, "although I no longer look so wan, I'm not so well as I was before my recent hemorrhage. But I mustn't let Takeo notice that." And she counted impatiently the days she must wait for his return.

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In the last few days, however, all communication with Tokyo had been interrupted. She had not received a line from her mother-in-law, from her parents or even any word from her aunt.

To pass the time she was seeking distraction in arranging the wild lilies in a glass vase, and turning to the woman who had just entered with a jar of water, she said, "Doesn't it seem strange to you, Iku, that no mail arrives?"

"It certainly does," replied the servant. "Of course they must all be well, and have nothing new to write you. It won't be long before news comes, and who knows but what it'll arrive this very day. . . . How beautiful these flowers are! Oh! If only the baron returns before the lily season is over!"

Nami looked at the flowers she held in her hand, and exclaimed, "They are really magnificent! But I think it would have been better to let them bloom where they were born. Why cut them from their stems before their time? It's cruel!"

At that moment a *kuruma* was heard before the door. The viscountess Kato had arrived.

Ever since she had been forced to decline the widow Kawashima's mission she had been unable to find peace; she soon went to the

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Kataokas where, with intense surprise, she learned that she had just been preceded by Yamaki, who had left with the general's formal promise. She was stricken with keen pain not only at the thought that her plan for awaiting Takeo's return was thus destroyed, but also to see that the matter had already proceeded so far. And since there remained nothing to do, she desired at least to see her niece at Zushi, to prepare her tactfully for the return to her father's roof. Not without reason did the general fear the effect of this sad announcement upon his daughter, for the blow would fall all the more cruelly since it was so unexpected.

"How happy I am to see you, dear auntie! We were just this moment talking about all of you!"

"I'm really so glad that the Madame Viscountess has come," added Iku, and then, turning to Nami, "See, my lady, I was right!"

"Well, now, my dear Nami-san, how do you feel? From the way you look, you've had no trouble since your last attack. Have you?"

Madame Kato could not face Nami's clear, unsuspecting look without a shudder.

"Thanks, auntie," replied Nami. "I feel

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better. But how are you? You don't look very well."

"I? Oh, I have a slight headache. . . . Have you heard from Takeo recently?"

"Yes, auntie. He wrote me day before yesterday from Hakodate. He says he will return soon, but the exact day hasn't yet been arranged. He promises to bring me a wonderful gift. . . ."

"Really? Did he write you all that?" asked Madame Kato. Then, uneasily, she added, "It must be late. Is it two o'clock yet?"

"What is your hurry, auntie? You know that you're perfectly at home here. Make yourself comfortable. How is O-Chizu-san?"

"She's well. And she asks me to give you her best wishes."

As she spoke these words she took the cup of tea that Iku handed to her, but engrossed as she was in a single thought she forgot to bring it to her lips, and placed it down again.

"Please, Madame Viscountess," repeated Iku, astonished. "Would you like to have some of our nice fresh fish?"

"Yes, thanks, Iku."

Nami's aunt shook herself, as if awaking

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from a bad dream, cast a glance at her niece and turned away.

"No, no. I haven't any time today. Nami-san, dear, you must come with me."

"Come with you? Where?"

Nami was greatly surprised.

"Yes, Nami-san. Your father, upon the advice of the doctor, with whom he has conferred in regard to your illness, wants to have you near him for a little while. Your mother-in-law is also willing."

"He wants me near him? But why?"

"Because of your illness, as I have just explained. Besides, for a long time he has felt your absence keenly."

"Really?"

Nami looked incredulously at her aunt and old Iku, too, shook her head in token of her suspicions.

"But the Madame Viscountess will stay with us for tonight?"

"No, that is impossible. The doctor is waiting, and it's better for us to start out before the sun goes down. We must take the first train that goes direct to Tokyo."

"Really? Is the Madame Viscountess in earnest?"

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Old Iku began to feel worried. Nami, too, was at a loss to understand. But since her aunt came at her father's request and with definite instructions, and because her mother-in-law had been apprised of the arrangement, she consented to the preparations without any further discussion.

"What's on your mind, auntie? I needn't take my nurse along, need I, seeing that I'm coming back so soon?"

"Better have her come with us. She may be useful."

At exactly four o'clock three *kurumas* were waiting just outside the house. The women came out and stepped into the vehicles. Nami wore a gown of silver gray encircled by a blue girdle, while in her hair was placed a sprig of jessamine; in her hands she held a gray-blue parasol.

As the *kurumas* were about to start Nami raised her handkerchief to her lips, stifling a fit of coughing. Then she said, "Iku, I'm leaving you here for a few days. It's so long since I've been in my father's house. Ah! And the clothes I was embroidering for Takeo! Only a few touches are needed. I'll finish them

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when I come back, and they'll be ready, anyway, in time for his arrival."

The aunt hid her face beneath the large parasol, for before she had succeeded in mastering herself two large tears had rolled down from her eyes.

The destiny of each of us is irrevocably fixed. The abyss awaits us and we rush toward it without suspecting anything. Without suspecting? That is the wrong word. For when we draw close to the abyss a strange shudder freezes our being.

Nami, who had willingly prepared to accompany her aunt, happy in the thought of seeing her father once again, nevertheless felt her heart palpitate violently as the *kurumas* rolled on their way. The more she reflected upon her present condition, the more restless and pained became her countenance. Her uneasiness increased upon beholding the sad expression of her aunt, who sat opposite her in the train.

Upon arriving at the Shimbashi station Nami's mind was so disturbed by sad presentiments that the joy of her return after so long an absence was completely eclipsed.

The nurse helped her to descend and with

slow step Nami followed her aunt through the crowd. Before the entrance an officer passed rapidly by, very close to the two women. He was talking with another person, but turned around as he recognized Nami, and their glances met. . . . It was Chijiwa.

He looked at her for a moment with a curious gaze, uncovered his head with affected politeness and smiled! Chijiwa's look and his smile caused Nami's heart to throb with anxiety; she blanched and felt a shudder course through her veins, — a shudder far different from that which was caused at times by her illness. She was still trembling when she stepped into the carriage beside her aunt. Not a word was exchanged between the two women during the final stage of their journey.

The sun, which enveloped the rapidly moving carriage in its melancholy rays from the west, had almost disappeared behind the mountains; twilight was already stealing over the earth, when they came in sight of the Kataoka home. The heavy evening atmosphere was lightly perfumed with the scent of chestnut blossoms. A lamp shone above a wide gate, before which several wagons had stopped. From the vestibule came the sounds of men's

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voices. Everything seemed to indicate that somebody was moving in. Nami could not fathom the reason for all this bustle. Her aunt and her nurse helped her to the ground, while on the threshold appeared Madame Kataoka, who advanced several steps toward them, saying, "You were really very quick about it. . . . Thanks for your kindness. You must both be tired."

Madame Kataoka's glance swept rapidly from Nami to Madame Kato.

"How are you, mamma? And . . . where's papa?"

"In his study," replied Madame Kataoka laconically.

At this moment the merry voices of Nami's little brother and sister were heard; they ran up to her, shouting the name of the sister whom they had been so impatiently awaiting; without heeding their mother's admonition they rushed to Nami's arms. Koma, too, came forward.

"Oh! Mi-chan and Ki-chan! How are you? dearies!"

Michi clung to his sister's arms. "Now you're going to be always with us," he cried. "I saw your things come. . . ."

Nobody dared to silence the indiscreet youngster; the uneasy glances of the step-mother, the aunt and Koma turned to Nami.

“What’s that he’s saying?”

Nami directed her astonished gaze toward her step-mother, then to her aunt, and then to the boxes that were piled up in a room near the vestibule. There was no longer any doubt about it. . . . There was her dressing-table fresh from her husband’s house! And that was surely her trunk, too!

Nami trembled violently and, unable to support herself, swayed over toward her aunt. Everybody wept.

Footsteps were heard. Nami’s father was coming to share the sad scene.

“Oh, father!”

“My darling, how I have longed to hold you in my arms! Welcome home!”

The general for a long time pressed against his robust bosom the frail, quivering body of his favorite child, who was shaking like a leaf.

Some moments later peace had returned to the sad home. In the general’s study two persons were talking a father and a daughter. As on the wedding day, when she had left her

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father's house never to return, so now she listened to the counsel of her beloved parent. . . . And now, as then, Nami fell to the floor and wept with her face hidden between her father's knees. . . . The general, meanwhile, ceaselessly fondled his daughter's head, as she shook with heartbreaking sobs.

CHAPTER X

The Quarrel

“GOGWAI!¹ Gogwai! Special account of the Korean crisis! Extra!”

A young newsboy was thus shouting his wares, as he rang his bell with incessant clamor. Directly behind him ran a *kuruma* that stopped brusquely before the Kawashima house on Bancho street.

It was Takeo.

The widow was in great fear lest Takeo, on his return, should show intense resentment at what had happened during his absence. But since “he conquers who first draws his sword,” she had sent all of Nami’s belonging to the Kataoka house the moment Yamaki had brought her the news of the general’s consent. This, in accordance with the good adage, “Never put off for tomorrow what you can do today. . . .” “I may have committed a murder,” she told herself, “but upon my word, if there was an

¹ ‘Gogwai,’ literally, in addition to the regular number. These ‘extras’ consist of a simple sheet of paper containing the latest despatches.

abscess, it had to be pierced if we were to be saved." For several days she had been in an ugly humor. Now she suddenly took a marked change for the better.

On the contrary the servants, who were all naturally on the side of the young wife, showed their indignation at the widow's inhuman actions and anxiously awaited the return of the baron, expecting to witness a scene.

Matters were at this stage when Takeo reached his home. The urgent letter that the viscountess had sent him had been mailed too late to reach him before he started on his return voyage; and his mother, in her letters to him, had certainly made no reference to the steps she had taken and to the course of events. So that Takeo had not the slightest suspicions of what had happened; scarcely had he landed at Yokosuka when he hastened to Tokyo.

The maid who came out of Takeo's room came close to the girl who was preparing tea and said to her, in a low voice, "Do you know? It looks as if the baron knew nothing at all about it. He brought a present for his wife!"

"Is that possible?"

"Where in all the world can you find a mother capable of forcing the separation of her

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son from his wife during his absence? But just watch. He'll be furious. That woman is worse than a demon!"

"You're right," assented the girl.

"I never saw a woman so absurd, so miserly, so repugnant! All she can do is keep calling others down, but she doesn't know how to do things herself. You can easily detect her noble origin, — the daughter of a Satsuma peasant! It really nauseates me to live in this house!"

"But is it possible that the baron should know nothing about the sending away of his wife?"

"It certainly is. He was so far away! Nobody could imagine that a mother would send away her son's wife just as if she were an ordinary servant! And he's so young! Really it's heartbreaking. And such a dear as his poor wife is! It's even worse for her. She'll go mad! Ah! Listen! Listen! There goes the old lady shouting again. Better take care to fulfil your orders to the dot, or woe to your head, Mat-chan!"

Meanwhile, from one of the rooms the voices of mother and son kept echoing with increasing loudness and anger.

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“You promised to wait until I came back!” Takeo was crying. “You didn’t mention these things a single time in your letters! You went straight ahead and did as you pleased! Ah! But I won’t endure this! On the way I stopped at Zushi and asked Iku why Nami was away. She answered that she had some affairs to attend to in Tokyo. It looked strange to me. But I should never have dreamed that you, — ah! This is too much! Indeed, it is too much!”

“Very well, then. I was wrong!” exclaimed the widow. “Then I beg you to forgive me I have nothing against Nami, but I love you too much, and”

“You’re always thinking only of me. If you’d give a moment’s thought to my honor, to my reputation, to some human feeling”

“Takeo, you’re a man, — not a woman. At least I hope so. Is Nami so much to you that you don’t hesitate to humiliate your mother?”

“Ah, but what you have done is more than I can stand!”

“Well, it’s too late to do anything about it now. It’s irreparable. They were perfectly willing and now we can’t turn back. You yourself, — what can you do? Remember, Takeo, if you were to commit some folly now it would

bring dishonor not upon your mother alone, but upon yourself, too.”

Takeo listened in silence and bit his lips madly. Suddenly he jumped to his feet, dashed to the floor a basket of apples that he had brought as a gift to his mother, and exclaimed, “Mother, you have killed Nami, and with her, your son! I’ll never look at you again!”

At once Takeo left to rejoin his vessel at Yokosuka.

When the situation in Korea began to point toward a definite crisis, the Japanese government declared war against China. This happened about the middle of July.

On the eighteenth of the same month Vice-Admiral Kabayama was named head of the fleet and the flagship *Matsushima*, to which Takeo was attached, received orders to join the other ships at Saseho.

Takeo, who in his heart meant to expose himself as target to the shot and shell, and thus end a life that was henceforth purposeless, left with sinister enthusiasm.

General Kataoka had built for Nami a quiet cottage in a peaceful, sunny corner of his ample estate, and summoned Iku from Zushi, sending her to his daughter’s new dwelling.

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In September he was ordered into service, and after having with deep emotion recommended the care of his precious invalid daughter to his wife, he left, on the thirteenth of the month, to follow the Emperor to the general headquarters at Hiroshima. In the following month he proceeded to the peninsula of Liao-tung with Generals Oyama, Yamaji and other officers.

The personal details of the story which we have for some time been following now pass into the background. At the moment which we have reached, individual hatreds and rivalries are eclipsed by the light of patriotism; adversaries and partisans fight side by side and await the outcome of the war between China and Japan.

Part III

CHAPTER I

The Battle of Yalu River

IT was five o'clock in the afternoon, September 16, 1894, and the Japanese squadrons, ready for battle, were steaming out of the mouth of the Tai-dong river, their prows directed toward the northwest, in search of the enemy's fleet, hoping to goad it into a decisive contest. If the information received was exact, the meeting should take place near the mouth of the Yalu, where the warships were protecting the Chinese transports.

First in line was the flying squadron, with the *Yoshino* as flagship, and comprising the ships *Takashiho*, *Naniwa* and *Akitsushima*. Then followed the main fleet, with the ships *Chiyoda*, *Itsukushima*, *Hashidate*, *Hiyei*, *Fuso* and *Matsushima*; of these the last was the flagship. At the rear came the gunboat *Akagi* and the armed merchantman, *Saikyomaru*, which carried on board the First Admiral. The twelve vessels had left port at noon, stretched out in a long line, ploughing the dashing waves

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of the Yellow Sea, which, like serpents with immense coils writhed in a luminous wake.

After sunset the moon rose, round and silver. The ships sailed silently on, cutting the waves that shone with gold and silver reflections; the vessels were clearly silhouetted against the calm light of the night star.

In the officers' cabin on the *Matsushima* dinner had just been finished; those on duty had already left for their posts, and a few remained behind in lively conversation. The port-holes were tightly shut, lest a gleam of light betray the presence of the vessel to the enemy. Within it was exceedingly hot and the animated faces of the young officers had become fiery red. Upon the table stood several empty goblets and a large plate of cakes. Everything had been devoured; a last piece of cake awaited its sad fate at the hands of some famished future admiral.

"Our army, by this time, must have taken the city of Phyong-yang in Korea, don't you think so?" asked a young ensign, his cheeks resting on his hands and looking around to his superior officers.

"But what's the navy doing? Ah! These endless hours of inactivity!"

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A young lieutenant with a red, smiling face, joined the conversation from his shadowy corner.

"But don't you know that the play can't be finished until the curtain has at least gone up? A long wait is a pleasant excitement to the nervous system."

"Ah! Enough of this meaningless nonsense! I'm heartily tired of this playing blind-man's-buff with the Pey-yang.¹ If we should fail to meet him this time, too, I'll never know a moment's peace until we've forced passage through the gulf of Petchili and saluted the forts of Taku with our guns."

A cadet turned toward the officer who was so openly expressing his dissatisfaction, and said in all earnestness, "It would be like going into a sack. What would you do if you were shut up inside of the gulf and blockaded?"

"What? Blockaded? I wish we were! But our enemy is too slow to blockade us!"

"I don't want to discourage you, young man, but it seems to me that this time also the much wished for encounter will not take place. Really, I don't know what we can do, seeing how slowly the Chinese move."

¹ The Chinese Fleet.

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At this moment footsteps were heard and a tall officer appeared upon the threshold.

The small ensign turned quickly around.

“Well, pilot. What news? Nothing in sight?”

“Only the moon. After roll-call I advise you to go to bed and get some sleep.”

The newcomer hastened to the table, seized the last slice of cake and gulped it down. Then, apologetically, he began, “Just try to stay one short hour on deck and you’ll feel a ravenous hunger like mine! Boy, bring us a few more cakes.”

A third ensign, wearing a red shirt, smiled as if to congratulate his mate upon his appetite.

The tall ensign understood the smile and added, not without a touch of sarcasm, “And how are you, my dear friend? Isn’t it our privilege, perhaps, to swallow a whole plate of cakes and look with scorn at the veterans?”

“But you know, mate, that the men can’t sleep because of their joy of the next day? If we make a failure of it, it won’t be the fault of the marines, but of. . . .”

“Ah! We’ve no doubts as to our bravery!” protested the oldest officer present. “Only we

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must calm our nerves. That's why I recommend to you, my boys, calm and patience!"

"While we're on the subject of bravery," observed another in the group, "I can't help admiring that second captain of the third corps. Splendid courage! And yet, if every one of us held his life so cheaply it would be a really excessive rashness! He sells his life as if it were an ordinary piece of merchandise. . . ."

"Do you mean Kawashima? Now I remember. It was,—yes, during the bombarding of Wei-hai-wei. He accomplished wonderful feats of bravery. If he had been General-in-Chief at that time he would have led the fleet into the gulf of Petchili and not content with Taku, he would have pressed forward on the Pei-ho, determined to take old Li-Hung-Tchang prisoner."

"His character has changed completely. He gets angry at the merest trifle. A few days ago I mentioned the Baroness Kawashima in a joke. Why, he just flared up and I'll wager he would have been glad to kill me on the spot. I'm more afraid of his anger than of a shot from a 30-centimeter gun. I'm afraid something serious has happened. . . . Tell us about it,

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Garibaldi; you're his best friend,—do you know the secret?"

The pilot, as he spoke these words, looked at the man in the red shirt who was nicknamed Garibaldi.

At this juncture the boy entered with a plate full of biscuits, thus leading the young officers to abandon their discussion.

At ten o'clock came the muster. The men on duty went to their posts, while the others went to sleep. Speaking in a loud voice and lighting any lights was forbidden. Above deck and below reigned so deep a silence that the vessel seemed to be an abandoned hulk. Except the voice of the watch there was heard only the noise of the propeller and the ceaseless pulsation of the machine, as of a giant heart. The white smoke rose from the funnels to meet the rays of the moon.

On the commander's bridge the shadows of two men stood out against the luminous background. The one at the left was rigid, motionless; the other paced up and down noiselessly. They were Takeo Kawashima, second captain of the third battery, and the chief pilot, together doing their four hours' guard duty upon the bridge.

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Having reached the end of the bridge Takeo raised his glasses and looked into the distance. Nothing was in sight, so he dropped his right hand, which held the instrument, and leaned his left against the rail. Two officers conversing in undertones passed by the opposite gun, crossed the bridge and disappeared in the darkness.

Everything was in deep silence about the bridge; the wind became gradually colder, while the moon poured its crystal light over the waters.

On the ample horizon that enveloped the two men on the bridge nothing could be seen but the shining waves of the Yellow Sea, the indistinct outlines of a rocky island to the right of the vessel and the fleeting shadow of the *Akitsushima* that was following the same route.

The mainmast was now enveloped by the sparks that came from the large smokestack, and now abandoned by the countless gleams. Above, the autumn sky was studded with innumerable stars. The milky way, bereft of its splendor, seemed pale and wan, as if envious of the sea that shone so resplendent in the clear moonlight.

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Three months before, Takeo had left his mother without any reconciliation between them. But how many changes had occurred in such a short time! His spirit had been shaken by the precipitous train of events that had led to the war in Korea; later, on the occasion of the farewell when the bugles of war had sounded in the bay of Saseho, his heart had contracted convulsively as in a rude awakening. The declaration of war, however, had filled him with new strength and redoubled his courage, and at the bombardment of Wei-ha-wei he had received his baptism of fire. Before his eyes there unfolded a phantasmagoria of new and marvelous things, without giving him the time to observe them in detail. . . . So much the better for him. There remained no time for him to give himself up to the sad contemplation of the unhappy thing that lay hidden in his heart. In the hour of his country's peril his own grief, which had always been for him a question of life and death, shrank to small proportions. He buried it deep within him, determined to fulfill all his duties, and with the rash courage of him who despairs of happiness, threw himself into the struggle for the glory of his country. Death had for him the same im-

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portance as a speck of dust that flashes in the sunlight.

But when peaceful night had fallen over the bridge, when in his hammock he tossed through a sleepless night, the grievous remembrance of his hopeless plight would come to assail him.

A long time had passed. Now the intensity of his grief had given way to a continuous, melancholy stupor. The resentment and the rage that had seared his heart were stifled in the arduous tasks imposed upon him by his new duties.

His mother had written to him twice, wishing him a happy and speedy return. Despite the sad circumstances in which he found himself, he could not help thinking of his old mother's solitude and rebuked himself somewhat for his haste, praying for her welfare. At bottom, however, his rancor and bitterness at the great wrong she had done him could never be wiped out. Too deeply impressed in his soul was the sweet image of his unhappy wife, and every night, in the tempestuous dreams that showed him the destruction of the enemy's fleet and the hour of his own death, he saw again the face of his sick wife wrapped in a shawl as white as a shroud.

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Three months had gone by without his having received word from her. Was she still alive? No. . . . Yes, yes, she was still among the living. For not a day passed without his thoughts returning to his beloved, and it was impossible that she, too, should not think of him in the same manner. . . . Had they not sworn to live and die together?

Takeo thought often of that hour. And he thought often of their last farewell. Ah, where was she who, while night was rapidly falling at Zushi, cried the name of her beloved from the doorway, and prayed him to come back soon, with the soul and the voice of one who speaks a last good-bye? Where was she? He looked about him as if in a dream and before his mind, which was troubled by the vividness of his recollection, there appeared in the resplendent aureole of the night star a thin figure wrapped in a white shawl.

The next day, perhaps, the fleet would find the enemy. A shot might strike him and his life would vanish like a dream. . . . Then he thought again of his mother who lived such a solitary life. And he thought of his dead father, and recalled the beautiful days spent at Etajima. . . . And his spirit turned to Nami-san. . . .

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“Kawashima!”

Takeo whirled around, shaken from his meditations by the friendly slap across his shoulder. It was the chief navigating officer.

“What a magnificent night! Who would think that we were sailing toward battle?”

Takeo nodded in agreement, banished the tears that veiled his eyes and raised his glasses. The moon still shone with its crystal light and nothing could be seen on the sparkling surface of the sea.

The moon had set and dawn was painting the sky a rosy pink. Daybreak of the 17th of September was rising over the Yellow Sea. At six o'clock the Japanese fleet was approaching the island of Haiyang. The gunboat *Akagi* had been sent ahead to reconnoiter in the bay of Shoto, but returned without news of the enemy. The fleet advanced slowly and was soon off Takooshan with Talu and the Seolu Islands on the port side.

It was now eleven. Takeo was just leaving the officers' quarters for the deck when a voice cried, “Smoke!”

At once the deck resounded with hurried footsteps. Takeo, his heart beating wildly, stood

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motionless for some time, half way up the steps. A sailor, who happened to be coming down, stopped also at the same instant, in waiting. The two men exchanged glances.

“Is the enemy sighted?”

“It seems so.”

Takeo, in two bounds, was upon the deck, peering at the extreme edge of the horizon. The signal of alarm sounded, men were running in all directions, whistles were shrieking, and the signal flag was hurriedly hoisted to the top of the mast. At the bow stood a group of silent sailors. On the bridge, the commander, vice-commander and other officers kept their gaze fixed in the same direction. . . . Far, far off, where the sky seemed to graze the sea, could be seen long streaks of black smoke,—one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. The enemy fleet!

An officer on the bridge looked at his watch and said, “It’ll take them an hour and a half to get here. If we’re quick, we can have a quiet lunch before settling down to business.”

Another officer of the group nodded his head in agreement.

“They always keep us waiting, but this once

we'll use the time of the wait to a good purpose," he said, stroking his mustache.

Soon the imperial banner was fluttering at the top of the mainmast, and the signal for assembly on deck echoed through the entire ship. From all directions the men came running, each directly to his post; some to the look-out, some to the engines, some to the torpedo room, others prepared for the care of the wounded; all seemed electrified. In an instant all was in order; the whole crew was ready for the fight.

It was now nearly noon and the bell rang for lunch before the battle.

Takeo, on the bridge, was aiding the captain, who was giving the gunmen instructions regarding the loading of the rapid-firing guns placed on the starboard. He was thus a few minutes late in reaching the officers' quarters, where his mates were already seated, eating.

The short ensign raised his very serious eyes, and the man next to him wrinkled his forehead and bent his head. . . . The young cadets were casting furtive glances in the direction of the veterans, who from time to time gave them a word of advice. One of them arose in his place. It was the man with the red shirt.

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“Comrades, I am pleased to notice that your courage is unshaken, and that all of you, in the presence of the enemy, are seated calmly reunited around this table. But I am very much afraid that tonight, at mess, some of us won’t be here to answer the roll-call. So let’s shake hands in a cordial farewell to one another.”

He seized and shook the hand of Takeo, who was sitting beside him. At the same time the others arose to their feet and shook hands likewise with their neighbors. As the young officers excitedly jumped to this unanimous, enthusiastic manifestation of their courage, several plates were thrown to the floor.

An ensign, whose face was adorned with a scar, grasped the hand of the ship doctor.

“If we are wounded, take good care of us. And here’s your pay in advance!” He shook the doctor’s hand vigorously for some moments.

All laughed, but at once became serious. One by one they left. The room was strewn with empty plates in the utmost disorder.

At twenty minues past twelve Takeo was sent to the bridge by the captain of his corps to the vice-commander. From that elevated point he could see the Japanese fleet stretched out in a single line; the four cruisers of the first flying

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squadron were in the vanguard, about 4000 metres apart. The six vessels composing the main squadron, with the *Matsushima*, the *Akagi* and the *Saikyomaru* at their head, followed the cruisers, holding themselves under cover at the left.

The imperial banner fluttered boldly and gracefully from the mainmast, the funnels emitted dense puffs of black smoke, and the waves parted before the advancing prows, dashing into sprays of white, shining foam.

On the bridge the officers were defying the wind, which blew furiously. Several of the men were looking far off into the distance, through the glasses, while others held their hands on the hilt of their swords.

Yonder, in the north, the ten streaks of smoke were growing in size after having suddenly appeared, as if the enemy's fleet had arisen from the waves by magic.

Masts, smokestacks, hulls, gradually became visible, and soon afterwards the banners at the tops of the masts could be made out by the naked eye. The two colossal ironclads *Ting-yuen* and *Chen-yuen* had taken their positions in the centre of the line; the left wing was formed by the *King-yuen*, *Chih-yuen*, *Wei-yuen*

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and *Tsi-yuen*, and the right wing was made up of the *Lai-yuen*, the *Chingyuen*, *Chao-yuen* and the *Yang-wei*. To the west were seen four other battleships with six torpedo boats. The Japanese fleet proceeded in a column toward the centre of the enemy's line, approaching slowly, as is usual in naval battles. But when the Japanese vessels had come within a distance of about 10,000 metres of the enemy ships, with a rapid movement the flying squadron turned to the left to attack the adversary's right wing. The line of battle changed from the figure of a T to that of a V. In this order the Japanese continued to advance until within a distance of 6000 metres from the foe. At this moment a white streak of smoke burst from the side of the *Chen-yuen* and two 30 centimeter shells whistled through the air, falling into the sea at the starboard of the flying squadron and sending a shower of white spray into the atmosphere.

The waters of the Yellow Sea, which, on the previous night had sparkled like silver in the moonlight and whose clear surface had but lately reflected the calm, vague cloudlets of capricious forms and the island with the smil-

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ing hills,—these same waters were about to become the scene of a terribly bloody struggle.

Takeo left the bridge to return to his gun. The captain did not remove his eyes from the spy-glass; the gunners had already taken off their jackets and uncovered their tanned, muscular arms up to the elbow. In a state of tension that almost took away their power of breathing they awaited the order to fire.

In the meantime the flying squadron had opened fire upon the right wing of the enemy, which was advancing. The *Matsushima* at the head of the main fleet was rapidly approaching the Chinese vessels, which were now assuming the shape of a wedge, with the *Chen-yuen* and the *Ting-yuen* at the apex.

The hostile fleets drew closer together and these two battleships were clearly visible to the naked eye. Takeo remembered having seen them some years before in the port of Yokohama and observed their maneuvers with the keenest interest. Yes, without a doubt they were the same ships. But now they advanced puffing voluminous volleys of thick black smoke, churning the foaming waves with wild fury, booming with cannon. They advanced quickly. He watched them with a feeling similar to shud-

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dering, but without a trace of fear. And they sped forward toward him like birds of prey in search of victims.

Suddenly there was heard a rumbling as of distant thunder; then a deafening noise echoed through the air above the *Matsushima*, seeming to envelop the mainmast. The projectile fell into the water, causing a wave of twenty metres to rise from the sea. Takeo felt a shudder run through his body, but he mastered himself at once. He looked around; his men, affected by the same shudder, wavered for an instant and then regained their courage. The vessel pursued its course. Three, four, five shells burst almost simultaneously. One struck a boat hanging from the port side, the others struck the sea so close to the ship that the deck was washed by the waves cast into the air.

"Captain, must we still wait before we open fire?" asked Takeo, impatiently.

It was several minutes after one.

"Four thousand metres!"

The order was passed forward, and the gunners prepared to fire.

At last the bugle blew. At the command "Fire!" the *Matsushima* sent a broadside toward the enemy. The vessel swayed; a dense

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cloud of white smoke enveloped the starboard side. But at that same moment, as if in reply to the simultaneous volleys, a huge enemy shell brushed the funnel, falling into the sea. Two or three gunners involuntarily lowered their heads.

The captain turned toward them jestingly.

“What was that? Who made you bow your heads to the enemy?”

Takeo, the cadets and the gunners laughed.

“Fire! Firm on your legs, now! Fire!”

All the forward guns were discharged in rapid succession. The great 32 centimetre gun thundered and vomited its fiery death, shaking the vessel. The battleship behind them was opening fire, too.

All at once an enemy shot exploded near one of the guns and a gunner aside of Takeo fell backwards. He tried to get up, but sank down again. His blood had spurted over Takeo's uniform.

The gunners looked around.

“Who is it?” asked one.

“Isn't that Nishiyama?”

“Yes, that's who it is.”

“Dead?”

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“Fire!” shouted the captain. Again the gunners discharged their murderous volleys.

Takeo ordered the corpse to be removed and went back to his post.

The captain noticed Takeo’s blood-stained uniform, and asked, “Are you wounded, Kawashima?”

“No, no. Only spurts from the other fellow.”

“All right, then. Let’s avenge his death!”

The guns were discharged incessantly while the vessel kept advancing at great speed. The main section of the fleet, making a rapid arc, surrounded the right wing of the Chinese formation and drew up to the rear of the enemy.

The first phase of the battle was over; the second was about to begin. The forward guns of the *Matsushima* became silent for a while, and both officers and gunners brushed the powder off their clothes, and wiped away the sweat and the smoky grime.

The placing of the Japanese vessels had become as follows: The flying squadron that had attacked the enemy’s right wing, putting out of combat the *Yang-wei* and the *Chao-yuen*, was ready to follow the main section, which had already flanked the hostile fleet and was preparing to attack it from the rear. The *Hiyei*,

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the fifth vessel of the main squadron, had been left behind because of its low speed, and was making great efforts to diminish the distance between it and its companion vessels. Bravely it attempted to break through the Chinese line. It even succeeded, but as a result it was forced to abandon the fray because a dangerous fire had started under deck, and required the undivided attention of the crew.

The *Saikyomaru* had similarly carried itself beyond danger. Only the *Akagi*, a small ship, was left alone in face of the enemy, and tried desperately to make a way for itself to the *Hiyei*. The four ships of the flying squadron and the five of the principal squadron maintained their order of battle unbroken. On the side of the enemy, the *Chao-yuen* was in flames. The *Yang-wei* was put out of commission and the right wing was in disorder. Three vessels of the left wing left their position to give chase to the *Hiyei* and the *Akagi*, while the torpedo boats had been separated from the rest of the fleet.

Several vessels, with the *Chen-yuen* and the *Ting-yuen* at their head reversed their direction when they saw that the Japanese had sur-

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rounded them, and in a column made for the main squadron.

Now had come the second encounter. The *Saikyomaru* had signalled that the *Akagi* and the *Hiyei* were in danger, whereupon the fastest vessels of the flying squadron came hurrying to their assistance. Meanwhile the main fleet continued to describe a great circle as it surrounded the enemy. The Japanese squadron then discharged all its batteries.

By half past two the Chinese fleet had been entirely surrounded, and had reached the other side. The flying squadron, however, had made a new attack upon the enemy, and the three ships that were trying to overpower the *Akagi* and the *Hiyei* were suddenly thrown upon the defensive. The Japanese warships were thus divided, holding the enemy at their mercy between them.

The third phase was about to take place.

Meanwhile the hostile fleets, in which Japan and China had gathered their bravest and most skillful crews, burst into a furious struggle, seeking to open a way for themselves and mingling in bloody conflict.

Like giant serpents trying to tighten their

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coils about a monstrous whale, so did the stormy, foaming waves of the Yellow Sea churn threateningly about the vessels.

Simultaneously the chief squadron at the right and the flying squadron at the left assailed the enemy from opposite directions, and the battle was renewed with murderous violence.

The more bitter the battle became the more Takeo forgot himself. In his student days, he had been fond of baseball, and when the critical moment would arrive he would forget himself utterly in the enthusiasm of the game, carried away as if in a whirlwind. Now he felt the same wild emotion. He seemed to be everywhere at once, tireless, his nerves stretched feverishly to the snapping point; his powers seemed to redouble, as if in a sudden delirium. The problem was now to reduce the distance between his vessel and the enemy; now, on the other hand, to retreat rapidly before the danger of being approached too closely, surrounded and cut off from the rest of the fleet; now this or that volley was to be directed against the enemy. Takeo's voice had become hoarse as a result of shouting orders to his subordinates. But he did not even notice it. Shells from the

enemy burst upon the deck of the *Matsushima*, piercing the shields, setting fire to the wood-work, covering the quarter-deck with blood. But Takeo paid no attention. The thundering of the enemy's guns was as sweet music to his ears, and his heart's throbs beat time to it. Every interruption in the booming of the cannon brought dissatisfaction to him. His cool manner and evident confidence lent new courage to his companions. They paid little heed to the death-dealing bombs of the enemy; they loaded, aimed, discharged their guns with the same calmness and nonchalance as they would have employed at bloodless maneuvers. The guns thundered ceaselessly, without the need of orders; the dead and the wounded were removed at once without the slightest disorder. The entire system of military organization operated like clock-work, even in the midst of battle.

In the meantime the general aspect of the terrible slaughter was rapidly changing. Now the sea and the sky, veiled by thick clouds of black smoke, and the waves, which rose furious and foaming, made it almost impossible to see the signal flags. From moment to moment the guns boomed, the shells exploded with a crash,

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projectiles whistled around and above the ships, while the tempestuous sea filled the air with clouds of spray that splashed from the furrowed waves.

The voice of the captain was shouting.

“Look! The *Ting-yuen* is in flames!”

Through a rift in the dense cloud of smoke could be seen enveloped in a column of fire the prow of the enemy's ship, which bore a flag with an enormous dragon.

Takeo and his sailors shouted excitedly.

“Hurrah! The *Ting-Yuen* is on fire!”

“Forward! Give it the finishing blow!”

And with new impetus the guns were discharged against their flaming target.

The Chinese fleet was now in complete disorder, caught as it was between two fires; the *Chao-yuen* had sunk, extinguishing in the waves the conflagration that was devouring it; the *Yong-wei* had been put out of battle.

The *Chen-yuen* was rapidly sinking, the *Ting-yuen* was wrapped in flames; even the *Lai-yuen* was beginning to burn. Unable to continue the fight, the enemy took flight, abandoning the *Ting-yuen* and the *Chen-yuen*.

The flying squadron launched in pursuit of the enemy ships, and the chief squadron

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directed their fire against the *Ting-yuen* and the *Chen-yuen*.

The fourth phase of the struggle had begun.

It was now three in the afternoon. The fire on the *Ting-yuen* was spreading, but the ship put up a vigorous defense. The *Chen-yuen* stood bravely at its side and valorously, fearlessly indeed did those two gigantic ironclads resist the assaults of their enemies. The five vessels of the Japanese fleet circled around them countless times, riddling them with shells.

At about 3 : 30 P.M. the *Matsushima* had worked its way to a position opposite the Chinese flagship, and when Takeo saw that his ship's projectiles, discharged from his rapid-firing guns struck the side of the enemy's ironclads, bounced back and fell into the water, he became furious; he bit his lips and madly grasped the hilt of his sword, shouting, "Captain! They must bear a charm! Look! Look! The devil is in this!"

The captain, his eyes flashing sparks, was running hither and thither from one gun to the other.

"Fire! Aim at the deck! The deck!"

"Fire!" shouted Takeo.

The excited gunners discharged their guns

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simultaneously at the decks of the Chinese war-ships.

“Another one!” exclaimed Takeo. A hellish racket shook the vessel in a frightful dance, as if a volcano had suddenly erupted. At the same moment he felt himself struck and thrown to the ground with great violence. An enemy shell had hit the rapid-firing gun, a few paces away. “God!” cried Takeo, getting up, then falling heavily back. He felt excruciating pain in his legs. He looked about. The deck was covered with blood and strips of human flesh. The captain was not to be seen. The shield that protected the cannon was pierced by a huge hole through which something blue could be seen moving: the sea.

Overcome by pain and an indescribably nauseating odor, Takeo closed his eyes. But he could still hear the cries of the wounded, the crackling of burning wood, the shout “Fire! Fire! To the pumps!”

Then it seemed that right near him he could hear the noise of hurried footsteps, and four strong arms lifted him up. As they touched his legs he felt a terrible pain in the head and a cry escaped him. He imagined that a fiery, luminous vapor enveloped his eyes, and he lost consciousness.

CHAPTER II

In Time of War

IT was at the general headquarters at Hiroshima, toward the middle of October. The first division had long since left for Kintchu Hanto, on the peninsula of Liao-tung. The second division had just arrived,—an army of young, vigorous soldiers,—and the town seemed altogether too small to hold them. Besides, the Diet had been convoked in extraordinary session, and six hundred deputies had arrived at the capital one after the other. The place was in great confusion and bustle. Everywhere resounded the noise of rolling kurumas hastening hither and thither; the tramp, tramp of the troops; the clanking of the sabres. The town of Sanyo was alive with animation comparable to that which had reigned in Kyoto at the time of the Restoration.

In Otemachi street, one of the largest of the place, could be read at the entrances to the hotels the names of the chief personages there lodged. “His Royal Highness, Prince Arisu-

gawa, Chief of General Staff;" "His Excellency, Minister Ito;" "Lieutenant General Kawakami," and so on. Two or three streets down every house was placarded with notices: "Military Requisition Bureau. Number of mats. Number of rooms." The overflow of soldiers who had not been able to find room in the barracks had been quartered in private houses; almost every house bore a notice upon which was written the names of the officers and sub-officers, and the number of men in the company. Here and there various offices had sprung up, "Saké Sold Here."—"Canteen"—"Enrolment Bureau."—"Equipment"—From outside, shadowy figures could be seen hastening hither and thither about the inside. Before one store were some bottles of lemonade that were being arranged in large cases; at another was a young fellow, perspiring freely as he packed boxes of biscuits that were piled up in the hundreds near by.

Just cast your glance over the street. Here is a mounted officer galloping by on horseback, on his way to the headquarters. There comes a kuruma post haste; in it sits a journalist, pencil behind his ear, doubtless on his way to the telegraph office. Men are hastening from the

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station, valises in hand and swords wrapped in a kind of yellow cotton cloth; their faces are tanned by the sun and they are still wearing their summer uniforms, soiled and in need of mending; they must be coming from Ujina, where their boat landed this very morning. An old senator, whose picture I remember having seen in some magazine or other, passes them by in his carriage. Some soldiers soon to be hurried to Manchuria are marking time in the street, humming tunes in their nasal voices. Further off, on a veranda, a gay young chap with a florid face is singing a martial tune in a northern accent. From the other side of the river some young, fresh voices reply to him; but these voices come from natives, as may easily be discerned.

At the corner of the street a large sign calls attention to a store. "Army Supplies." Beside this seven-foot sign are several smaller ones. Before the entrance lie piled up, one on top of the other, woolen blankets and winter clothes. A man, evidently the superintendent, is giving orders to a half dozen street gamins busily engaged in making bundles. No loafing in that place, to be sure. Soon a man of about fifty comes hurrying out of his store, accom-

panying a visitor to the door. He is bald and has a large red mole under his left eye. He gives several orders to the superintendent and is about to go in again when he notices a kuruma running up the street at a rapid pace.

“Oh! Tazaki-san! Ohé! Tazaki-san!”

His cries were in vain, for the kuruma rolled along on its way. One of the boys nearby was hurriedly despatched after it, and soon the kuruma stopped and turned, coming back toward the store.

A man of about fifty came down from the vehicle; his countenance was of a bronze tint, his beard thick and gray. He wore a black silk *haori* and a hat that bore witness to long service. He did not appear to be over pleased at having been summoned. However, he at once recognized the person who had sent for him, for as he crossed the threshold he exclaimed, “What! Is it you, Yamaki? Really you?”

“And how are you, Tazaki-san? Since when did you come back?”

“I am on my way to the next train for Tokyo,” said Tazaki stepping down, walking into the store over the coarse straw mats and the thick ropes near the door.

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“So soon? Where have you been, then?”

“Up to the present, at Saseho. Now I’m on my way home.”

“At Saseho? On a visit to Takeo-san? Your master I should say.”

“Yes.”

“It wasn’t nice of you to go right by me like that without stepping in to see me! I’m very much surprised that I’ve received not a word about you from either my daughter or the old baroness.”

“Ah! I was in such a hurry!”

“But it would hardly be so great an inconvenience or loss of time to step in for a moment, at least. Make yourself comfortable. Dismiss the kuruma. You can take the next train. . . . How is Takeo-san? I have heard that he has recovered at the Saseho military hospital. At that very time I was busy with the departure of the first division, and could only find the time to write him a short letter of sympathy. Well, how is he now? Were his bones broken? Ah! The thigh? I’m ever so glad that he’s getting better now. His mother will feel easier, too.”

Tazaki looked at his watch and arose, but Yamaki seized him by the sleeve and protested.

“What’s your hurry? I have a message to

give you for the baroness. You can leave by the last train, can't you? There's still plenty of time. I'll leave a few instructions here and then we'll go out for a drink of saké. Besides we've got excellent fish here."

The sun was sinking, setting the waves of the river Amayatu aflame with its fiery rays, and enveloping in its last beams the little tea-house on the shore.

On the second story a large, agitated, turbulent crowd was making a loud noise. A meeting was taking place there, for the purpose of discussing a controversy that had arisen within the ranks of the special Diet.

On the floor beneath, in an isolated room, Yamaki and Tazaki were engrossed in a secret conversation. They desired to be alone, hence no woman was waiting upon them.

Tazaki had been steward in the Kawashima house since the days when Takeo's father yet lived. He had continued in the same position, but now dwelt in a neighboring house of his own. He was not a man of great intelligence, but he deemed it unworthy of himself to fill his own purse at the expense of his master's income, and therefore enjoyed the full confidence of Takeo and the widow, and had been sent to

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visit his master, who was ill at the hospital in Saseho.

Yamaki sipped his glass of saké, placed his hand against his forehead and then spoke.

"The fact is that I stayed only a day in Tokyo, then I had to return at once to Hiroshima and was thus unable to learn just how affairs stood. So it seems that Nami-ko-san was seriously ill? It certainly was a cruel thing to do! Still, it was necessary, in order to shield the Kawashima family. So she's really better now, and is again at Zushi? You never can tell anything about this disease. It's incurable, and despite favorable signs, is fatal, as you know. What does Takeo-san think about it? Is he still angry?"

Tazaki, swallowing the savory soup by the spoonfuls, replied slowly.

"Yes. There's the rub. The widow was concerned only with the welfare of her house, and in view of that we may be lenient in regard to her overstepping the bounds. But don't you think, Yamaki, that she pushed her maternal rights altogether too far when she took advantage of our master's absence and drove his wife away without even consulting him? Of course I advised her repeatedly to wait till her

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son came back; but you know her character. . . . Personally I hold that my master is right and I say that his anger is completely justified. . . . Then there's that other thorn, Chijiwa. They say he's in China at present, isn't he?"

Yamaki looked intently at the questioner's face.

Chijiwa? Yes. He left a short while ago. I, too, have had some unpleasantness with him. I've had to pay pretty dearly for my relations with that fellow. He had the impudence to ask me for a farewell gift, adding that in case he should be killed it would serve as my last tribute of affection.¹ Then he said that in case he survived the war he would return with the order of the Golden Hawk. And in that manner he got more than a hundred yen out of me. Well, to come back to Takeo-san. He'll come to Tokyo as soon as he's cured, won't he?"

"Ah! No. He proposes to go back to the war."

"Really? I know he's a brave fellow, but don't you think he ought to prefer returning to his house and be reconciled with his mother? I don't know how great his affection was for Nami-ko-san, but now that the marriage is dis-

¹ Koden, — a gift sent to the family of the deceased.

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solved, and that his first wife is so seriously ill, it might be well for him to renew his relations with his mother. Indeed, there's no other solution possible than to forget the past and let the wound heal. What do you think, Tazaki?"

"Our master is so good, that even if his mother was wrong he imagines that his own conduct has not been above reproach. My visit took place at the express desire of the baroness, so that we can't speak of an attempt at conciliation on the part of Takeo-san. Still. . ."

"Of course it's hardly the proper time to talk of engagements in these days of war," resumed Yamaki, "but the best possible thing for him would be to take another wife. Don't you think so, Tazaki? Couldn't he forget Nami-ko-san once and for all, and make peace with his mother? Of course, young folks don't forget their first love so soon, but when they find another they fall in love again pretty easily."

"The baroness thinks the same way, but. . ."

"Do you mean that it will not be easy to persuade him?"

"As you know, he is very stubborn."

"That's all very well, but when it's a question of his own future, and that of his house. . ."

Their conversation was interrupted for a few

moments. It seemed that on the floor above the discussion had been finished, for a loud applause resounded. The windows scarcely shone with the pale light of the evening, and from afar came the sounds of military trumpets.

Yamaki cleansed his saké cup by dipping it into a water basin and offered it to his guest.

“Tazaki-san, how is my little daughter over at the Kawashimas? She’s so inexperienced that it will be hard for her to satisfy the baroness’s requirements.”

About a month after Nami’s departure, Yamaki had sent his daughter Toyo to the widow Kawashima under pretext of having the girl acquire good manners under the guidance of the baroness. In reality, of course, his aim was far different. He was now very anxious to hear what had taken place.

But Tazaki laughed in silence. Doubtless he had recalled some comical incident.

When Takeo had left his home in anger, his mother had looked at him with terrible eyes, shouting, “Go, disobedient son! Out of my sight!”

The widow knew that Takeo had always been

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a model child and had never opposed her will, yet despite this, and despite her knowledge of his great love for Nami, she held that in case of a conflict between Takeo's love for his wife and his duty toward his mother, he should surrender the first. For this reason, too, she had soon overcome her hesitancy and had brought the matter to completion during her son's absence, telling herself again and again that her only motive was the welfare of Takeo and of the family. When, however, she beheld her son's explosion of wrath she began to understand that she had committed an error and that a mother does not possess unlimited power over her son.

Up to that moment she had followed with a jealous eye Takeo's growing and enduring love for Nami. But when she saw that her son's affection, respect and obedience disappeared before his love for a girl who was at the point of death, she felt even more keenly the loss of all her influence over her son, and it seemed that she had been robbed of a recompense that was due to her because of her past sacrifices.

Nevertheless her anger against Takeo showed no signs of subsiding, and for a long time after

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Nami's departure she did not cease to inveigh against him.

But still another thing added fuel to the flames.

For, in a hidden corner of her heart there lodged an undefined fear, a vague sense of dissatisfaction the voice of conscience was making itself heard. However much she could not excuse her son's rebellious attitude, she feared none the less that she had gone beyond the rights of a mother.

What a power for good here below is peace of mind! On the contrary, how angry you feel when somebody tells you to your face, or some inner voice whispers to you, "You have done wrong!" Man is sometimes humbled before the tribunal of his own conscience, however, and hates to bend his knee, flushing at the wrong he has done. When a savage beast is struck by an arrow it howls; when man discovers his mistake, he feels resentment. This explains why this woman, feeling the sting of remorse, flew into a fury. Her anger against her son, her hatred of Nami-san, increased in violence.

Takeo had left his mother, slamming the door behind him. A day passed, then two, then weeks, and Takeo had not returned to ask for-

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giveness. Not only this, but he had sent no letters and written no apologies. Her heart brimming with anger, the widow poured out her fury upon the first thing or person that crossed her path; this relieved her somewhat. She would grow angry at thought of Takeo, at thought of Nami, at remembrance of the past or on considering the prospects for the future; she grew irritated at thought of her rheumatic pains, and because of her solitude and the general helplessness of the situation. Thus heaping one cause for anger upon another she would sink beneath the weight and at last fall asleep from sheer exhaustion.

The Kawashima home had become almost unbearable. The servants, tired of living in such an atmosphere of anger, more than once had packed up their things, ready to leave. But they were used to these outbursts.

At this juncture news of the battle near the Phung Islands and the naval victory of Asan spread through the city.

The widow lived through days in great anxiety, all the more so because Takeo had not written a word to her ever since he had left for the war. Her sad lonesomeness increased when she heard the news of other mothers who had

come to Tokyo to bid their sons good-bye, and how their sons later sent them letters regularly. She began to fear that death, at any moment, might snatch her son away and that she would never see him again. In this moment of terrible anxiety, after a short struggle with her pride, she sent two letters to Takeo that should reach him before he faced the enemy.

About a month later Takeo's reply arrived in the form of a telegram, sent from the hospital at Saseho, where he lay wounded. The hands of the poor mother trembled as she opened the dispatch. And although the message spoke of recovery, she was very uneasy and sent Tazaki to bring back more exact information in regard to her son's health.

When Tazaki came back from Saseho the widow Kawashima was somewhat reassured. Now she could look forward to embracing her son, brought back to health, and already she gave thought to providing him with a wife as soon as the war should be over. Thus she hoped to distract his mind from sad recollections of Nami, and at the same time to lay the foundations for the family's future prosperity. She even proposed to profit by the experience of

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her past error and to seek to make reparation for her arbitrary actions.

Thus her single preoccupation became the duty of looking around for a suitable second wife for Takeo. She went over mentally the entire list of her young lady acquaintances and friends . . . but she could not find a woman that corresponded to her desires.

It was precisely at this point in the widow's investigations that young O-Toyo came to the Kawashima household, sent thither to acquire good manners. Naturally, Yamaki's secret purpose did not escape Mme. Kawashima, so that she soon realized that O-Toyo was by no means free of faults.

However, the widow, who had exhausted her resources, decided to look into this possibility, too, thus seconding Yamaki's wish. For this reason she determined to subject O-Toyo to a rigid régime of examination.

It was the result of this examination that brought the smile to Tazaki's lips. Neither the widow nor Toyo had been satisfied with the outcome of the test, and the servants began to make fun of the poor girl behind her back. At first, indeed, there had been a period of calm; then a circumspect dart, then a continued

bombardment. . . . This was the regular plan of battle that was used by the widow with all her subordinates. It was the same system that she had adopted toward Nami, whose feelings had thus been so cruelly wounded. Now it was Toyo's turn. But that girl had a most enviable character, for she possessed the secret of being insensible to whatever was going on about her; so that the attacks and the arrows of the widow had no more effect than a drop of rain. Mme. Kawashima made up her mind to employ harsher measures.

It was Toyo's nature to love her own comfort, and her spirit was phlegmatic and lazy; not only did she reveal a lack of pride, but it even seemed that she lacked personality altogether.

When Toyo, in the spring evenings, would walk alone among the flower-beds of the garden, with her body and soul alike enveloped in a rosy cloud, tasting the sweetness of relief from the hands of her tyrant, and of losing herself in dreams, she was no longer the jealous girl who had been languishing for love of Takeo. Once inside the Kawashima home she had quickly learned what a dear price she would have to pay for her love. Scarcely did she get

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up every morning when a long, laborious day's work awaited her, with reproofs and sarcasm as her only reward from the widow. "If this were not my sweetheart's house," she would often tell herself, "I'd flee from it without a moment's hesitation!" But if she was to attain her goal she must persist. From time to time she would visit her mother to get new courage, only Toyo promised herself that she would never fall in love again.

The widow Kawashima looked upon O-Toyo as the safety-valve through which to vent all repressed anger, while the servants used the poor girl as a target for their gibes. She, with a patience that she had never before displayed, waited for better days when her beloved should return.

The arrival of O-Toyo had been a source of new cares for the widow. "The lost pearl is beyond price; the daughter-in-law who has gone appears as the paragon of wisdom and virtue," says the proverb. There was no comparison between Nami-ko and O-Toyo. Each mistake made by Toyo irritated the widow all the more in that she was forced to recall how gracefully and perfectly Nami used to do her work. Now the baroness thought with regret of the young

wife whom she had at first so grievously judged.

Nami was modest, diligent, graceful in her movements, and although she did not at first appear striking or fascinating, still her grace and her gentleness soon conquered those who came in contact with her. The widow had early learned to take advantage of Nami's kindness and had never praised her good qualities, although she had silently noticed how sensible Nami was for her age.

When Toyo sat before the widow, her eyes half closed and her mouth opened in silly fashion, the baroness could not help recalling Nami's delicate profile, her thick, raven-black hair, her intelligent eyes that rose to her own as if to interpret an unexpressed desire.

The widow's heart beat fast, agitated by the feeling of a hidden remorse, and she tried with all her strength to drive the recollections from her mind, murmuring resentfully, as if to justify her cruel deed, "It was wrong of her to fall ill!"

Despite this the strange feeling persisted: a feeling that she dispelled with an attack of bad humor and banished with a tempest of abuse upon poor Toyo's head.

Thus it came about that at the very moment

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in which Yamaki was confidentially informing Tazaki of his plan to make Toyo the second wife of Takeo, the relations between the Baroness Kawashima and the young girl underwent a crisis almost as violent as the contemporaneous conflict between Japan and China.

“Shall I send her back? How shall I get rid of her?”

Another drop, and the cup of the widow's patience would run over.

CHAPTER III

Recovery

THE chirping of the sparrows almost at his bedside awakened Takeo. He opened his eyes.

He raised his arm, which had been stretched across the counterpane, and drew aside the curtains. The morning sun that was rising above the hills flooded the sick man's room with its festive beams. The slopes of the far away hills could just be made out in the cloud of mist, but the autumn sky above was of clear, even blue, and provided a magnificent background for the branches of a cherry-tree that rose not far from the window. Some birds were flitting from bough to bough, with restless song. Two of them flew right into the room and stopped for an instant to exchange a glance of sympathy with Takeo, who rose from his pillow not without pain. But soon they flew off, as if something had frightened or surprised them. Meanwhile, from the tree that they had left there fell slowly to the ground, through the peaceful air, several leaves of golden color.

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Takeo smiled at this gay greeting from Nature,—at the gentle sounds that had awakened him. Then his head fell back upon the pillow, and a wrinkle appeared on his forehead, as if caused by a sudden pain. He lay back quietly and shut his eyes again.

The morning was peaceful; no noise came to disturb the patients. From afar came the crowing of a cock and a fisherman's song. . . .

From time to time Takeo opened his eyes, only to close them at once, as if absorbed in deep thoughts.

More than a month before he had been wounded and brought to the hospital at Saseho. He had been struck by a piece of a shell that had exploded near the shield of the gun. Fortunately the wound had not reached to the bone, but had been confined only to a laceration of the flesh.

The captain of his division had been blown to pieces and many of his comrades had been killed. Few of the gunners had escaped without injury.

During the first days after he had been transported to the hospital he had lain in a feverish delirium, brandishing his arms wildly about,

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taunting the enemy and shouting orders, but his robust youth soon asserted itself and his general condition began to improve rapidly. After a month, although the wound was still painful, he was already able to leave the room for several hours at a time, escaping from its odor of medicines to the pure, fresh air of the clear autumn. The surgeon, it is true, muttered objection to the patient's haste.

Takeo awaited impatiently the moment when he would be discharged and could return to the war.

How strange! That life which he had despised as a vain thing had not cared to leave him. With the passing of the fever and the pain he felt, despite himself, a rebirth of his love of life, but together with this were reborn, too, certain sad regrets and recollections. His memory, which had apparently been obliterated in the heat of combat, and later in the delirious fever, now returned.

Just as a grave physical illness may have the effect of renewing one's constitution and fortifying the body, so had the terrible crisis that had brought Takeo face to face with death given his thoughts a brighter aspect.

The grievous blow and the extraordinary

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events that had saddened and darkened his life in recent months had also kept his heart in a state of continued tension. Now the brunt of the storm was past, but the dashing waves of his troubled soul had not yet subsided, for down in the depths reigned a wild grief, while, on the surface, the feelings that appeared now and then, like pale nymphs on a tempestuous sea, already announced a period of greater calm.

Takeo no longer harbored any rancor against his mother. The memory of Nami he preserved in his innermost soul as that of a departed, beloved one. And his thoughts turned to her as to a sad, sweet being that smiled to him from afar.

Tazaki came to visit him and he had word of his mother and some vague news of Nami, too. But the few words he heard about her were enough to bring the tears to his eyes.

After that, in his troubled dreams there often appeared the white apparition of a sick girl, alone in a garden where the wind beat furiously against the young firs. This sweet vision alternated with the horrible scene of the battle of the Yalu river.

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Several days after Tazaki had left for the east two parcels were delivered into Takeo's hands. The address of the sender did not appear.

Takeo's thoughts turned to what had happened to him a week before.

He had just thrown the paper away and his gaze had begun to follow the clouds through the window. His room mate had left the day before, so that now Takeo was alone. The afternoon was advanced, and inside it was beginning to get dark, while without, the autumn rain fell ceaselessly. In the neighboring room a wounded soldier was receiving electric treatment and Takeo could hear the muffled noise of the apparatus which accompanied that of the rain-drops against the window panes, making the solitude sadder than ever. Takeo looked absent-mindedly at the tops of the trees swaying in the wind and at the thin boughs that bent and straightened up in rapid turn. Lost in sad imaginings he watched the stirring of the bushes for some time, then with a sudden motion hid his head under the covers. He had lain thus for about five minutes when he heard some one enter.

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“A package and a box for you. Are you sleeping?”

Takeo raised his head and saw a boy approaching the bedside.

“What’s that? For me?” exclaimed Takeo.
“Where does it come from?”

The boy read the name of the sender a name that sounded rather new to Takeo’s ears.

“Open the box and unwrap the package, please.”

When the top covering of the bundle had been removed a small packet appeared, wrapped in a bright red material. It contained a coat of light wool, a soft, white vest, a belt of white crape, a pair of embroidered slippers and a cushion of softest down. The box was full of pears and bananas, his favorite fruits.

Takeo’s heart beat faster.

“No letter?”

The boy looked again and again, but could discover no message.

“Let me see the first note.”

Takeo read his name and his heart leaped for joy. . . . A wave of hot blood rushed to his face. . . . Her dear little hand had written his name. . . . Her very own! And who else, indeed, could it have been? Was not

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the white, soft material she had sent stained with the tears that had flown from her adored eyes? Had not her weak hand trembled as she wrote? Takeo was impatient to be left alone. . . Then he gave free vent to his repressed sobs, to his tears of mingled grief and joy.

Takeo now realized clearly that Nami occupied his soul forever, and that in her heart, too, dwelt an infinite love. All day long he was accompanied by thoughts of her, and during the night, she came to him in sweet dreams.

He felt that not even death would be able to sever their souls, despite the fact that social laws and conventions had raised a barrier to divide the region of dreams from that of reality. The world could do whatever it pleased to part them, but Nami would forever remain his sweet little wife.

His mother, in her name, had separated him from his wife, and Nami's father had ratified the separation. No bonds united them henceforth in the eyes of the world. Would it not be possible, once he was completely recovered, to call her back, to receive her once again as his wife? Ah! What an enchanting dream that was! But no, it was impossible. Takeo knew

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only too well that the social customs of his country absolutely prohibited the renewing of bonds once dissolved. He knew that any attempt in this direction was doomed to failure, in addition to increasing the bad feelings between him and his mother. And Takeo could not forget how bitterly he had sustained his struggle against her.

Yet how insupportable was the thought that in all the wide world he could not own the liberty of loving whom he chose! From day to day this sense of helplessness gradually increased, soothed only by the thought that in his heart and soul, in life and beyond death, Nami would forever remain his wife.

Such were the thoughts that occupied Takeo one calm autumn morning.

The physician came at the accustomed hour and smiled with satisfaction. In a few days the wound would be healed completely.

Later a letter from his mother was brought to him, in which she expressed her joy at Tazaki's news of her son's improvement, her hope for his return as soon as the doctor would permit the journey. She had something very important to tell him!

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Important news? Most certainly it concerned the matter that Takeo suspected and feared greatly. After a few moments of reflection Takeo decided not to go to Tokyo.

In the first days of November, Takeo learned that his vessel, the *Matsushima*, which had been badly damaged in the battle, had been repaired and had taken to sea en route for the theatre of war. Takeo left the hospital, embarked upon a merchant vessel bound for Dalny and went to join his squadron, which had anchored in that same bay.

The day before he left Saseho he mailed two letters. One of these was addressed to his mother. . . .

CHAPTER IV

Temptation

AUTUMN winds were beginning to blow. The renowned summer resort was slowly losing its visitors. Today, the first of November, was unseasonably gentle. A young lady accompanied by a woman of about fifty, was walking along the beach at Zushi enjoying the calm peace of a splendid autumn day.

The fishermen and the few invalids who were still upon the seashore recognized the slender, graceful woman. As she passed by them they greeted her with compassionate cordiality, for all of them knew, in part, her sad story.

The young lady was Nami.

Life no longer held out any hope for her,—her health diminished day by day as autumn advanced. She no longer cared to live.

Nami had returned to Tokyo with her aunt in the month of June. From the day upon which the whole sad truth had been revealed to her, she began to grow worse and her hemor-

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rhages came more frequently. The physician saw that his efforts to combat the disease were futile. The family began to feel the keenest anxiety and Nami herself now awaited death with resignation. Death, indeed, presented itself as the easiest way out of a cruel plight, and while her sick body lay upon the pillows, her spirit, already freed of its earthly dress, wandered in an ideal world. Her soul longed to take flight across the immense spaces and reach at last the place where she might shed her tears in the bosom of her adored mother.

But death delayed. . . . Every day she hoped would be the last, but instead, day followed day, each one as sad as the other. She could no longer understand how life could hold hidden beauties for others, and how death could appear horrible and terrifying to so many human beings. Why should anybody take the trouble to follow the doctor's prescriptions, and give her the medicine that enabled her to prolong so useless and painful an existence?

A single star shone through the dense darkness: her love for her father. He visited her often, gave her the medicine with most affectionate care, and beautified the house in which his sick little daughter was to be brought back

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to health. He made every effort to combat the insidious illness. When she would hear his footsteps, and see his face light up with a smile as he noticed a deceptive improvement in her condition, she could not hold back her tears. Oh! When her thoughts reverted to her good father, whom she loved so much and who suffered so much, she no longer dared to invoke death. If death would not come to her, would spare her, she would find the will to live just for love of him.

Still another force dwelt secretly in her heart: her faith in her husband's love,—a faith that had not been shaken by past events. But certainly the future was dark and hopeless.

She could not deceive herself with the thought that the severed knot would be tied again, even if her health were to be regained. But she lived in the certainty that nothing could break the sweet ties of their souls, their communion of feelings and ideas, the immense love that still united them. That would never die.

Thus it was that in her affection for her father, in her faith in Takeo, she found the strength to live and to aid courageously the efforts of her doctor. In the month of September she was able to return to the lonesome villa

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at Zushi with her faithful Iku. There Nami's spirit seemed to become more serene, for the beauty of the surroundings sweetened her character even more. When, after her bath, she would stop on the beach, seated in a comfortable chair, listening to the splashing of the waves upon the shore and the chirping of the birds in the nearby wood, it seemed to her that she was still in the sweet season of the past spring. And it seemed, too, that her husband ought to be coming at any moment. . . .

Life at the Zushi villa passed by quietly and without novelty. . . . Nami's only diversion was to compose verses and arrange flowers. . . . Once or twice during the week the doctor came from Tokyo. From time to time she saw her aunt and her cousin, and even her step-mother. Several of her former schoolmates had written to her, expressing sorrow at her illness. But all of this failed to comfort Nami. . . . She awaited only Chizu's visits with impatience. Her little cousin knew better than any other how to guess her desires and satisfy them.

Rarely she thought of the Kawashima household, and when, in her recollections, there arose the thought of her former mother-in-law, a feeling of hostility, and even of fear, possessed her.

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When she learned that Yamaki's daughter had been sent to the widow Kawashima, the news displeased her greatly, but after a moment she had understood that this had not depended upon Takeo, in whom she preserved the most absolute faith.

She would walk along the beach, and her gaze would often turn to the west; she would seek the farthest point on the horizon, where the sky merged with the sea. The two beings that she loved most on earth were far, far away, in the war; for her father, too, a few days after his daughter's departure for Zushi, had been called to his post.

Although she felt that she was now separated from the whole world, still her heart anxiously followed the fortunes of the war; she read the papers closely, rejoicing in the victories of the Japanese army and of the naval forces to which Takeo belonged. In the latter half of September she had learned the news of the battle of the Yalu, and a few days later she read the name of Takeo in the list of the wounded. During the nights that followed she could not sleep. Her aunt at Tokyo tried to get more detailed information and learned that Takeo's wounds were not dangerous, and that he was then at

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the Saseho hospital. Nami's thoughts could not leave the bed on which her beloved lay, and often she imagined herself falling upon her knees before his bedside, swearing never to leave him again.

With what deep grief she felt, every time she sank into such a reverie, that her dream was impossible of realization, and that the reality was so different! She could not send him even a token of affectionate recollection. . . . Only their hearts remained united. . . . The hearts of two creatures who once upon a time . . . ah! for only too short a time . . . had lived together,—a loving, happy pair!

And today she could not even send him a line! This thought was unbearable to the poor girl.

The very intensity of her desire, however, suggested her the solution to this problem. With the help of Iku she prepared Takeo's clothes and sent them off to Saseho, together with Takeo's favorite fruits, under cover of an imaginary name. . . .

The days dragged slowly by. . . . Toward the middle of November, Nami received a letter that bore the postmark of Saseho. Nami read the letter and wept. . . .

* * * * *

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One Monday, Chizu and Koma, who had spent several days at Zushi, left for Tokyo. The house, which had resounded with their peals of shrieking laughter, seemed sadder, lonelier than ever.

During these sad days Nami felt that she was closer to her mother. . . . It was the nineteenth of November: the anniversary of her death. Nami looked for a long time at her picture and hung it on the wall of the alcove in a silver frame which she decorated with white chrysanthemums in full bloom. Chizu had brought them from Tokyo.

Ten years had gone by since Nami had seen her mother for the last time. During this period she had never forgotten her duty of love and gratitude toward the dear departed. Never had her heart been moved as now at the recollection of the sweet face. Ah! If only her kind, adored mother could have come to the unhappy daughter! Nami would have told her all her griefs, and she, so compassionate, would have borne part of the heavy burden, under which Nami's shoulders bent with fatigue. Ah! Why had she fled, leaving her little child alone in the world? While Nami's mind was lost in

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these thoughts, hot tears ran slowly down her faded cheeks.

To the poor girl came, too, remembrance of happy days in the distant past when her mother was still living. She was eight years old, Koma was five; both were wearing a gown of similar fashion, rose-colored and embroidered with cherry blossoms. . . . They were in a carriage, with their mother between them, coming from the well-known photographer Suzuki at Kudan. The picture that she was now looking at had been cut out of that group taken at that time.

Ten years had gone by. . . . Her mother had remained in her mind unchanged, just as on the photograph. And the daughter?

She fled from thought of herself, but in that sad hour she could not control her thoughts. She felt only too keenly that her hopeless existence dwelt wrapped in dense mists and stormy clouds. The room in which her gaze wandered became transformed into a prison-cell, into which no ray of sunlight could penetrate.

The clock struck two. Nami shook herself free of her day-dreaming and ran into the next room, as if in flight from something. That room, too, was deserted, but the voices of Iku

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and the nurse could be heard from the next compartment. Nami stopped for a moment, undecided, then went out resolutely, crossing the garden and making for the beach.

The sky was dark, and thick clouds weighed over earth and sea; not a breath of air moved the dead leaves upon the branches. The surface of the sea, with its waves rolling in long shudders, was unfurrowed by a vessel of any sort.

Nami walked onward. No fisherman was to be met on the shore; no one's gaze followed the unhappy woman. A few paces ahead a girl was carrying a baby upon her back, and sang happily as she gathered shells.

As Nami went by her the girl smiled kindly. Nami returned her greeting and forced herself to smile in return.

Then she sank again into her sad reveries. All at once she stopped. She had come to a spot where the sand of the beach gave way to a small path across the rocks which led to the temple of Fudo,—the path that she had taken the previous spring, leaning upon Takeo's arms.

Nami commenced to ascend slowly.

Having passed the temple of Fudo she sat down upon a block of marble,—the very same

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upon which she had once rested with her head against Takeo's shoulders. . . . But at that time the sky had been serene and resplendent, and had been mirrored in a sea as smooth as glass. Now, instead, heavy, menacing clouds draped the distant blue. The waves dashed against the cliffs, breaking into showers of white spray. Not a sail was to be seen upon the troubled, trembling sea. Nami took from her bosom the letter that contained but two lines,—two solitary lines that moved her heart more than pages of fond words.

“Not a day goes by without my thinking of my sweet little Nami-san.”

Every time she read it her sad heart beat wildly, wildly, as if it were ready to break.

“Ah! Why has the world treated me so cruelly?” she asked herself. “I love him so much that my heart is oppressed to the point of death. . . . And he loves me, too. . . . Then why has our love knot been severed? Who could have done it? Isn't this letter written in his very heart's blood? Here, among these rocks, on a beautiful Spring day we swore eternal faith to each other,—eternal love. . . . The sea knows it . . . the cliffs were witnesses. . . . Why is the world so cruel as to annihilate us,

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smothering us under the weight of a horrible yoke? Oh, delight of my soul . . . here in Spring among these rocks. . . .” She opened her eyes she was all alone. The sea seemed to have calmed down a little. . . . Only the noise of the nearby waterfall came to her ears. Nami hid her face in her hands and wept.

Large, hot tears trickled along her small fingers. Her head bent over, wearily. . . . It seemed that her heart was benumbed. Thoughts came to her mind now as fleet as arrows. She recalled the days she had spent with Takeo those lived at Ikao, the day on which she became his wife. She recollected the day on which she had returned to Tokyo with her aunt, the day on which her mother had died. She saw the dear face once again then the face of her father, of her step-mother, of Koma, of the little ones. . . . Other faces, too, appeared and were confused in her mind faces of friends, of acquaintances. . . . Her thoughts turned to a friend that Chizu had recalled to her the day before. She was two years older than Nami and had married a young count, one year before Nami’s wedding. Her mother-in-law was very fond of her, but very soon the

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husband began to neglect her. A boy had been born to them, but the past Spring the couple had been divorced and the young wife had died shortly after. She had died because of her husband's desertion. But Nami's life was even sadder than that of the young wife who had died. Her tears flowed incessantly for a love that should never have been born and that could not die. They had been separated despite their great love. The destinies of persons are different, but life has sorrows and tears for all. Nami sighed, prostrated by a fit of deep dejection. . . . Her gaze now wandered as if lost upon the troubled sea.

Her thoughts became as sinister as the clouds above her: there was no longer any place for her upon earth. Born into a rich family, at eight years of age she had been bereft of her mother; ten years she had dwelt with her step-mother, and scarcely had her heart brightened with the illusion of having found a little happiness, when the saddest part of her lot began. And the terrible sentence of separation had fallen, to condemn all her remaining life to continuous grief a sentence worse than death. And if her beloved lived, she could never again call him husband she could never again

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be his companion in his hour of trial. Ah! Why had she come upon earth to serve as a target for the cruelty of fate? Why had she not left this earth with her adored parent? And why had she not died in her mother's arms, the first time they trembling embraced her tiny body? And why did she not die now, since her sad lot had been fulfilled? What value could life hold for an existence condemned to incurable illness, longing for impossible love? But even if her bodily disease could be cured, her heart could never endure it if her husband were not returned to her. . . . Ah! To die! To die! Death! Death! The only hope!

Without drying the tears that fell without interruption, Nami looked far over the sea.

In the direction of Oshima there suddenly arose some blackish clouds. The thunder rumbled, while the waves of the sea rose in fury. The tempest was about to break forth. A gust of wind sped past, and a mountain of foaming waves overwhelmed the earth, breaking against the cliffs at Nami's feet. The entire surface of the sea heaved as if in agitation, the waves rolled on, merging into still larger ones, hurtling like wild, indomitable steeds; cold sprays showered down upon the high spot where

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Nami, as if in oblivion, followed with her gaze the furies of the elements. . . . "The sea the sea, at the bottom of which is death! How far more beautiful must it be than life! How more beautiful to live at my husband's side in the form of an incorporeal shade than to drag out this life, joyless and hopeless! He is far away on the Yellow Sea but however distant he may be, these waves can reach to him. Oh! That I might dissolve into foaming spray so that my soul could flow to his!"

Nami replaced the letter in one of the folds of her girdle; she paid no attention to her hair, which had been loosened by the wind. She arose. Her slender body was shaken by the fury of the storm, her limbs were penetrated by an uninterrupted shudder. Above, the clouds sped along, rapidly changing shape, but black and threatening as ever. . . . Below, the waves boomed and leaped in a wild dance. The solitary pines bent and swayed fearfully. The tempest increased, the sea trembled, all earth was a cry of woe, and the deep rumbling of the thunder drowned the thousand voices of land and sea.

"Now is the time! Now! Help me, mother. . . . Call me. . . . Receive me. . . . And you, father,

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forgive your daughter. My short life will soon pass away like a dream!"

Nami arranged her clothes, removed her sandals, advanced to the furthest edge of the cliff . . . bent over toward the moaning waves.

In the moment just before the terrible leap a cry was heard behind her. . . . Two arms seized the body as it swayed over the abyss. . . .

CHAPTER V

The Story Told by the "Yaso"

"**I**KU, prepare the tea. She will soon be here," said Nami to her old servant, who was putting the room in order.

"She's a very kind woman," commented Iku, "and I'm really surprised that she's only a *yaso*,¹ a Christian."

"Yes. That's what I've been told."

"I'd never have dreamt that such a distinguished looking woman could belong to the *Kiristans*.² She wears her hair short."

"Well, what of that?"

"The women who believe in *Yaso*, don't cut their hair when they are left widows. No. They begin to dress with a great deal more care and look around for a second husband. . . ."

"Where've you learned all this?"

"Oh! I know that positively," declared Iku. "I assure you that many girls are now instructed in the Christian religion. I knew one

¹ i. e. Jesus. The word 'Yaso' denotes Christianity or its adherents. It is a term of scorn.

² i. e. Christians.

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who lived near certain relatives of mine. She was a dear little thing, but after she got into the habit of going to the missionary schools she changed character completely. Just imagine,—every Sunday, no matter how much her mother needed her help, she would leave her to go to church and nothing could hold her back. Moreover, she even said that she no longer cared to stay in the house because it wasn't so clean as school. Yet despite her long attendance at the school she never learned a single recipe nor how to do the simplest needlework. . . . Her parents began to fear for her future. She was proud and said she wouldn't marry a man who made less than 250 yen per month. Isn't that extraordinary? At first she was a model child and then she changed completely. Maybe there was some witchcraft about it? They say that happens very often among the followers of that religion."

Nami smiled and replied, "It sounds very serious. But every question has two sides and one ought to hear both sides before judging. Don't you think so, Iku?"

The old woman shook her head doubtfully. Then she looked gravely at her mistress. "I

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believe it would be for the best to keep away from that *Yaso*," she suggested.

Nami smiled again.

"Do you mean that I oughtn't to talk to that woman at all?"

"Well,—if all the Christians were like her it wouldn't be so bad. . . ."

Iku broke off her speech; a shadow was noticed upon the screen, while footsteps came nearer.

"Pardon me if I have come by the garden gate," a melodious voice was heard to say.

Iku ran to the door, which she opened, and bowed before a little woman of about fifty, dressed in black, with her gray hair cut rather short. Because of this the woman appeared thinner still, but her eyes shone with the light of kindness and her lips curled in a smile.

It was the Christian woman of whom Nami and Iku had been speaking,—the woman who, a week before, had seized Nami from the jaws of the precipice.

She made no effort to attract attention to herself, but whoever was with her for even the shortest space of time felt that he was before a person worthy of great consideration. Her name was Kiyo Ogawa, and she lived in Meguro,

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where she directed an orphanage. She gave herself up most enthusiastically to the care of the abandoned little creatures. Since the beginning of the month she had been at Zushi to gain back her strength after an attack of pleurisy, and by mere accident she had come just in time to save Nami.

Iku brought tea and was about to leave the room when she heard Nami say, "So you are leaving tomorrow? Isn't that too bad! Why, we scarcely know you!"

The old woman looked at Nami with a glance of sweet affection, and replied, "I should like very much to remain here for some time, and have other opportunities to speak with you. I should like particularly to stay until you were cured."

From her bag she took a little book.

"This is the Bible. . . . I dare say that you never saw one till now."

Nami, indeed, did not know the Bible. Her step-mother, during her stay in England, had so to speak become a Christian, but upon her return to Japan she had abandoned all Christian practices, and had left her Bible, together with her old shoes and papers, in her hotel at London.

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"I have never read it," replied Nami-san.

Iku could no longer stay away. She looked at the book with eyes that expressed mingled stupefaction and terror; doubtless she was sure that it possessed certain evil powers.

"When you read it," continued the woman, "your heart will open to a sweet, new influence. I am sure it will do you much good. If I could only stay here a little while longer, I would gladly explain a great many things in it. But since this is my last day here, I will tell you, instead, how I came to read it for the first time. . . . Aren't you tired? Lie down at your ease if that's more comfortable for you."

"No, thanks. I'm not tired. . . . Tell me your story, please."

Iku refilled the tea cups and left the room.

The old woman looked for a moment into space, then sank to her knees beside Nami, and with her eyes fixed upon those of her listener, she began.

"Life is short, but if you only imagine how many events it can contain, it seems much longer. My father was a *hatamoto*^{*} under the old régime and possessed a large fortune. Per-

^{*} Samurai. At the time here mentioned, the 'hatamoto' was a direct vassal of the Shagun.

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haps you will recall that estate with the elm plantation, near the Suido bridge at Koishikawa. Naturally, the property changed hands many years ago. Well, I was born in that house. When I was twelve years old my mother died, and my father was so stricken with the loss that he would not take another wife. Despite my youthful years, I had to assume the direction of the household until my brother married; several years later I, too, married, and left the paternal roof. Ogawa, my husband, was also a hatamoto, but higher in rank than I. . . . I was twenty-one years old at that time. . . . You weren't born yet.

"I had been brought up in the usual beliefs taught to our young girls, and I imagined that I should certainly be inferior to none in the matter of self-sacrifice. . . . But when I learned to know real life, I realized how difficult it is to put into practice the easy theory of virtue. We were at the troublous period preceding the War of 1868, and my husband was rarely at home. I lived with my parents-in-law, and with two sisters-in-law in other words, I had to obey and serve five people older than I. I can't tell you what a torment that was to me. My father-in-law, poor fellow, wasn't so bad,

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but how hard it was, even for him, to satisfy my mother-in-law! My husband had already been married, but his wife had been sent back to her parents shortly after the wedding. I don't like to speak ill of those who are dead, but my late mother-in-law was a violent, domineering person, and many is the secret tear I shed because of her. My sincerest efforts to please her were useless. But it was still worse when she discovered traces of my hidden tears. . . . She would become furious and rebuke me harshly.

"Not long before the outbreak of the civil war that was to put the Emperor back on the throne, a revolt broke out in the city of Yedo.* My husband, my father and my brother, who were all on the side of the old order, served as volunteers in Ueno. My father-in-law was severely wounded and I was about to give birth to a child. I didn't know what was to become of me under such circumstances. At last Ueno was taken; my husband fled toward the North, taking refuge in Hakodate; my father disappeared; my brother was killed and I lost track of his family altogether. In the meantime my father-in-law died and a son was born

* In 1868 this name was changed to Tokyo.

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to me. All this happened in the course of a few months. I was prostrated by anxiety, illness and grief. After the expulsion of the Shoguns our pensions ceased, our property was confiscated and I went on a journey with my mother-in-law, the child and an old servant, across the Hakone mountains to Shinzuoka, where we awaited the end of the troubles. What a horrible nightmare!"

The woman paused in her narrative. . . . The nurse entered the room, gave Nami her medicine, bowed respectfully, and left. The old woman closed her eyes for a moment, then looked at Nami and resumed her tale.

"The wretched plight of the faithful followers of Tokugava who had taken refuge in Shinzuoka is almost beyond description. The patrimonies and the incomes had been so greatly reduced that even Count Katsu was forced to lead a retired life. We were in the utmost want. My mother-in-law had been used to luxury and pomp, and I was not a little troubled on her account. I did my best to help the family. I gave lessons in writing and sewing to young girls, I made clothes for strangers. I was now beneath humiliation. But my mother-in-law became angrier and more severe than

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ever; my husband was in prison; my father's place of hiding was still a mystery. Our existence was so wretched that I would have preferred death, had not my child restrained me. The grief and the poverty of those few months affected me so deeply that I grew ten years older in that time. After a while my husband was freed and readmitted into the army. Then we crossed the Hakone mountains again, returning to Tokyo.

"It was the Spring of 1871. There then began for me a quiet life that would have been beautiful but for the malicious character of my mother-in-law and my anxiety as to the whereabouts of my father, from whom I hadn't received a word.

"That autumn my husband took a trip to Europe. One day, after having been on a visit to some friends in Koishikawa, I was returning towards evening in a *kuruma* that they had kindly procured for me. It was dark the clouds in the sky seemed to threaten a tempest. I was sitting in the *kuruma*, tired and thoughtful, as it dragged slowly along. Idly I glanced at the man who was pulling it, and at his large straw hat at his wretched clothes of oiled paper over which the rain drops trickled. The

pale light of the lantern that he carried in his hand cast sufficient light before him. . . . I heard the contact of his naked feet with the mire of the road,—a sound that was from time to time accompanied by an ill-repressed groan. Scarcely had we passed the Suido bridge when his lamp went out. The man stopped, asking permission to look for a box of matches in the compartment under the seat. I could not understand his words very well, for the wind was blowing hard, but his voice sounded strangely familiar. . . . When his lantern had been lighted again I saw before me . . . my father!"

The old woman involuntarily raised her hands and revealed her face. Nami burst into tears. . . . From the neighboring room came the sound of a sigh.

The Christian woman wiped her eyes and continued.

"I accompanied him to a nearby hostelry, and he told me his tale. After the capture of Ueno he had wandered here and there, earning his living in various ways. Then he had fallen ill in the most squalid misery. Now he was living in the hut of a poor gardener who had in former days served in our own home, and making a few wretched yen as a driver of

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kurumas. You can easily imagine how I felt on hearing this; my emotion, my joy, my surprise, my sadness so overwhelmed me that I could scarcely find breath for a word. But that evening we parted rather quickly, for my father insisted that my absence would cause anxiety at home.

"When I returned, my mother-in-law, who had been awaiting me impatiently, attacked me most venomously, and even dared to hint at a supposition that assailed my honor. My heart beat wildly, as if on the point of bursting. So cruelly did she upbraid me that I decided then and there to leave the house and join my father. I waited till she had gone to bed and fallen to sleep, then I changed my clothes and sat down beside my little boy's crib,—he was already six years old,—and wrote a note to my mother-in-law.

"Suddenly the little child seemed to awake; he stretched his tiny hand toward me and cried, 'Mamma, don't go away!' Of course he was dreaming, and recalling the previous day on which I had left him to go to my friends in Koishikawa. But I was greatly moved and watched my boy's face attentively. In his face I saw the image of another's . . . of his father.

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. . . . The pen fell from my grasp and I commenced to weep. I don't know how it happened, but at that moment I recalled an old story about a wife and her mother-in-law with a moral of self-sacrifice. My mother had told it to me when I was a child. . . . The story fitted my case exactly. I thought that everything might yet turn out all right if I were patient enough. . . . So I renounced my first plan. . . . Am I tiring you, perhaps?"

Nami, who was listening to the tale with her eyes full of tears, nodded for the woman to continue. The old woman brought her story to its conclusion.

"Thus I was unable to provide for my father as well as I should have done. I secretly sold my personal effects and sent him the money I received for them. Of course that couldn't amount to much. Fortunately at that time I was chosen to teach Japanese music to the wife of a European ambassador. What I received for the lessons went to help my father in his wretched circumstances. My young pupil was very kind to me and soon we became friends. She spoke to me in very incorrect Japanese, naturally. . . . One day she presented me with a book: the Gospel of St. Matthew.

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"You'll find it at the beginning of that little book: it had just been translated into Japanese. I tried to read it, but I found the story so novel and so strange that soon I laid it aside as something that could not be understood, and I gave no further thought to it.

"At the beginning of the next year my mother-in-law was stricken with paralysis, and this changed her character entirely. As proud and as domineering as she had been before, even so humble and submissive did she become now,—just like a child. My companionship became so precious to her that I couldn't leave her for the shortest time without being called back. And when I watched her as she slept whenever her pains ceased long enough to permit her to get rest, I repented ever having harbored any feelings of rancor against her. I would gladly have seen her strong and well once more, and I did all I could for her, without success.

"Not long after the death of my mother-in-law, my husband returned. My father then came to live with us, but soon he, too, fell ill and died. He told me on his death-bed that nobody could be happier than he, for he had found his long lost daughter and had been re-

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ceived into the new family with kind affection. More keenly than ever I felt regret at not having been able to do for him more than the thousandth part of what I should have desired.

“Now came another period of calm and peace. My husband’s position was gradually getting better, and my son was growing up into a good, affectionate child. Despite this, my troubles were not at an end. For my husband had taken to drink, as often happens amongst officers. This had a bad effect upon his character, which was otherwise upright, and rendered my advice and my prayers only too useless.

“Then came 1876, and my husband, who was a major, was sent south. During his absence my child fell ill with scarlet fever. I watched over him day and night. . . .

“It was the evening of the 18th of April. My son, who had improved somewhat, was sleeping peacefully. I had sent the nurse to sleep, and was sitting beside my sick boy’s bed doing some embroidery. Little by little my thoughts became confused and I sank into a light slumber that was soon disturbed by the noise of footsteps rapidly approaching my child’s bedside. I opened my eyes and beheld my husband in uniform, pale as death and

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stained with blood. He sat down at the bedside and looked at me fixedly. . . . I uttered a cry that awoke me. . . . I looked around. Nobody was there. The lamp was about to go out and my boy was still asleep. My heart beat wildly. My forehead was covered with cold sweat.

"The following day my little son grew worse all of a sudden and died the next night. I was desperate, and wailing with bitter tears grasped the little body that had so soon been taken from me. . . . That very night a telegram came announcing the death of my husband in battle."

The narrator became silent. Nami held back her breath. . . . For several moments the room was enveloped in absolute silence.

Then the old woman resumed her story.

"The darkness about me was now as dense and impenetrable as if the light of the sun and the moon had gone out forever. Ah! If the result of my life was to be as terrible as all this, it was better to die. . . . In fact, I fell seriously ill. But,—fortunately or unfortunately?—I got well. The world in which fate condemned me to live was henceforth empty for me. I could no longer bear to live in my old home, and I decided to go to live with a friend. As I was gathering my things, preparing for the jour-

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ney, the little book that I had received from the European lady fell into my hands. I opened it mechanically, without the slightest intention of reading it. But when I closed it, I put a little bookmark between the pages, and so later I opened it several times again. . . . At first I couldn't understand that mysterious language, but one day a ray of light came to me and I understood. My foreign friend had left the country, just when I began to desire the company of some one who could enlighten me as to the contents of the book.

“Several months later I was offered a place as assistant in a girls' educational establishment. It was a Christian institution. I became acquainted with a Christian family and every obscure passage in the book was explained to me. For sixteen years I have been living in the new faith, and but few days have passed without my opening the Bible. It is my strength and my consolation. At first I believed that everything ended with death. Now I am comforted by the certain hope of immortality. My father has returned to the Eternal Father. My son will be given back to me some day; all my griefs are consoled by this religion, which is full of hope.

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"This, in brief, is how I was brought to the reading of this book." As she said this the old woman looked intently at Nami.

Then she continued.

"I had learned something of your sad story, and I used to watch you often as you walked along the beach. I wanted very much to know you, and now that I have made your acquaintance it pains me to leave you. But I'll not think of you lightly, as of a mere passing acquaintance. It seems to me that something deeper than that unites us. I hope that you'll take courage once again and not let yourself think of life as a sad, unbearable burden. And when you'll feel better, try to read this book. I'm going back to Tokyo, but I'll think of you every day."

The following day the Christian woman left. The book that she had given to Nami remained near the young woman's bed.

"After she has suffered so atrociously herself," thought Nami-ko, "this woman finds time to comfort the miseries of others! In the midst of so many indifferent people, she who is neither my mother nor my aunt, deigns to remember me!" Nami took comfort from these

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thoughts. From time to time she would recall the sad story of the *Yaso*, and she would look into the book that the good woman had given her with such a compassionate heart.

CHAPTER VI

Port Arthur

ON the 22nd of November Port Arthur was taken by the Second Army Corps. "Mamma! Mamma!" cried Chizu, running excitedly into the house, waving the newspaper.

"What's the matter? You know it isn't nice to shout like that!" said the mother, looking at Chizu severely.

Chizu blushed in confusion, then smiled and suddenly became serious again.

"Mamma, Chijiwa is dead."

"Chijiwa?" exclaimed Madame Kato. "Chijiwa? How? Slain in battle?"

"Yes. His name is in the list of the officers killed. Better for him."

"Don't speak like that! Chijiwa killed in battle! I'd never have believed he was so brave. His death, at least, was more beautiful than his life."

"It's better that he is dead. Good idea for him to die. He was only a trouble-maker, wasn't he?"

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Madame Kato was silent for a moment, then said, sadly, "Chizu-san, it's a terrible thing, just the same, to die without having anybody shed a tear for us!"

"The widow Kawashima will doubtless mourn for him," added Koma, with an ironic smile. "By the way, mamma, do you know that O-Toyo-san has left the Kawashima home?"

"Really? Are you sure?" The mother's face expressed keen surprise.

"Yes. Yesterday there was another scene and O-Toyo ran off crying to her house. Well, I'm glad that it happened at last."

"Nobody can live in that house!"

Madame Kato sighed. Chizu was silent; mother and daughter looked at each other.

Chijiwa was dead. Three weeks later there came to the Kawashima home, from Takeo, a letter with a package that contained a human bone.¹

The letter read, in part, as follows:

"Two days after the taking of Port Arthur I went ashore with some other officers. We took possessions of the docks and the ships in port.

¹ 'Ikotsu.' A custom according to which a bone or ashes of the dead soldier are sent to his family.

The horror that had accompanied the terrible conflict, and that had followed it, surpasses all description. The odor of blood was still in the air. Accidently crossing the place occupied by an improvised military hospital I saw some men carrying a body on a litter. The mouth and the chin were uncovered and made a strange impression upon me. I asked the name of the dead, and I was answered, 'It is Lieutenant Chijiwa.' I removed the covering and beheld the white face of Chijiwa, with his teeth clamped together in the last agony.

"At the assault upon the fortress of Itsushan he was struck by an enemy bullet. He retained consciousness till the next morning, then expired. I sought out some of his comrades and inquired after the details of his final moments. They told me that he was not very well liked in his company, but that he was a brave fighter and that he was one of the first to enter by the North gate at the taking of Kin-Chow. But in other matters he had not acted very correctly. He always had plenty of money with him. At Pitzu-wo he had shown great cruelty toward the natives. Moreover, despite its being forbidden under the harshest penalties, he had robbed and plundered them, and because of this

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was soon to be brought up for trial. At any rate, we may say that his death was such as to cancel in part his past faults, and came to him as a happy way out of his difficulties.

“As you know, Chijiwa caused me much trouble in the past, and we had broken off all relations for good. But I bear no grudge against the dead; rather when I think of the days in which we were like brothers, I mourn him sincerely. I was able to secure permission to cremate his body. I send you a little bone from his skeleton, thinking that you may desire to bury it there with due solemnity.”

This was not the only interesting news that Takeo might have written in regard to his sojourn at Port Arthur. Something else of greater importance had taken place, but this he purposely made no mention of in his letter.

On the very day upon which Takeo had discovered Chijiwa's body, he had been obliged to stay over in the city before returning to his ship. The sun had already gone down. Takeo passed along between guards with their shining bayonets, beside generals on horseback, and orderlies who were scurrying hither and thither on their duties, among astonished, frightened Chinese, and curiosity-seekers of every kind

and nationality. At last he came to a fire at which several coolies were warming themselves.

"It's very cold," said one of these. "If we were home, we'd have a little fire and onion soup at least. . . . Oh! Kichi, what a fine prize you've got there!"

Kichi, indeed, was wearing a costly coat of red, padded silk,—surely part of the spoils of war.

"But just take a peep at His Excellence Gen, will you!" retorted Kichi. "He's wearing a fur-coat that's worth at least 400 yen!"

"Lucky Gen!" replied the first. "He never loses at cards, not a bullet can hit him, and he gets away with plenty of booty. And look at me! I never have any luck at all. I lost everything I had at Tailieuwan. . . . But I'll certainly do my best to get sweet revenge upon all you!"

"Be careful," observed his companion. "To-day I was in a house where I suddenly saw a soldier come out from behind a box. . . . He rushed at me from his hiding-place and unsheathed his sword. He thought I meant to kill him, but I was frightened out of my very wits. Luckily our soldiers happened along and finished him. Otherwise I'd have done the job myself."

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“The crazy fellows! Why are they staying here yet? Do they all want to be wiped out?”

Only two days had passed since the taking of Port Arthur and a number of fugitive Chinese soldiers had been killed without quarter in the houses where they had hidden themselves, because they offered resistance.

Takeo had heard the conversation as he walked slowly along the street towards the harbor. The roads were ill lighted and hardly a person was to be met. Near the arsenal it seemed to him that he could make out a dark shadow against the long, massive wall. Takeo at once slunk into an obscure corner that permitted him to watch without being noticed.

About fifty metres ahead of him two men were walking along, their backs toward him. One of these was of very stout figure; the other, quite thin. The shadow that Takeo had seen against the wall was now following the two men, who seemed to Takeo to be wearing the Japanese uniform. The shadow passed quickly and silently under the light of a dim street-lamp, and Takeo, from the large hat, recognized that it was a Chinaman. Something brilliant sparkled in the shadow's hands. Takeo hastened his step.

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The two officers had reached a turn in the street. . . . The Chinaman approached closer to them and when they had turned the corner he stopped for a moment, then jumped forward into the light and having reached a distance of about ten metres from the men he aimed his revolver and fired. The short, thin officer fell to the ground. . . . The Chinaman raised his weapon once more, aiming at the other officer, when suddenly Takeo's strong arm came down heavily upon the assassin's shoulder, causing him to drop the weapon. With a cry of rage the Chinaman hurled himself upon Takeo, and soon the two men were engaged in a furious struggle. The stout officer came running to the aid of the man who had saved his life, while from afar came the tramp of a Japanese patrol, summoned by the discharge of the revolver.

Takeo breathed with difficulty because of the effort of the struggle. He raised his glance to the face of the officer who had come to his aid.

The pale light of the street-lamp revealed the features of General Kataoka!

"You! Your Excellence!" exclaimed Takeo, astounded.

"Takeo!"

The general was no less moved than Takeo.

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Kataoka and his aide-de-camp had been attacked on their way back from a sortie. The aide was gravely wounded, but the general was unhurt.

Without knowing it, Takeo had saved the life of Nami's father.

When the news was told to Nami, old Iku exclaimed, "See! See how much we owe to him! Oh, my dear mistress! Try hard to get well soon!

Nami replied with her pale, sad smile.

CHAPTER VII

The Return of Takeo

THE year came to an end and the war was still going on. Now came a new year, the 28th in the era of Meiji. On the second of February Wei-hai-wei was captured and the Chinese fleet surrendered. By March the Pescadores had fallen into the hands of the Japanese, while in the north the imperial army was overwhelming the enemy like a mighty torrent and thrusting it beyond the river Liao. Then ambassadors were sent to Japan to discuss conditions of peace, and by the middle of April (the 17th) the peace treaty was signed at Shimonosaki, by Li-Hung-Chang and Count Hirobumi Ito. The intervention of the European powers, Russia, France and Germany, caused a modification of the treaty. Japan evacuated the peninsula of Liaotung and received from China an indemnity of 259,000,000 francs.

At the end of May the Emperor was received in triumph at the Capital, as Supreme Commander of the Forces of Land and Sea.

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The war was over. The Japanese eagle, with a vigorous blow of her wings, had put to flight the Chinese dragon.

After Takeo had buried the ashes of Chijiwa, the same day upon which he had saved the life of General Kataoka, he took part in the bombardment of Wei-hai-wei and at the occupation of the Pescadores.

At the beginning of June his vessel reached Yokosuka and he left for his home.

A year had passed since, furious at her cruel action, he had left his mother. The grave and frightful events that had taken place in the meantime, had in a measure softened his more violent feelings. During the long rainy days at the Saseho hospital, during the nights in which he had trembled with the cold before Wei-hai-wei, his thoughts had turned more than once to the warm room at Tokyo.

As Takeo entered his home nothing new greeted his gaze, unless it was the unknown face of the maid who opened the door for him. His mother was as stout as usual, and had been forced to take to bed because of her rheumatism. Tazaki came every day and sat for many hours in the small study, as was his wont. Everything that Takeo saw and heard was unchanged.

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There was nothing to divert the mind of the young ensign. He had come back to his mother after a long absence, had taken a comforting bath in his old home, and was now sitting on a soft downy cushion, eating his favorite dishes and resting his head against the white pillow of his bed; yet he could not find here the peaceful dreams of yore. The clock struck one, then two, and three. . . . His tired eyes would not close. His heart could find no repose.

The year that had passed had erased the memory of the rupture between mother and son; at least, so it appeared. Naturally the mother was happy to have her son back with her, and he in turn felt solaced upon beholding her. But both, after the first exchange of words, felt that they could never be to each other what they had once been. He did not ask after Nami, nor did the widow offer any information. And because both felt that they must avoid this topic in order not to disturb the external peace they desired, they experienced embarrassment at every lapse in the conversation.

Once Takeo resumed his home life every little object about him brought back vivid memories of Nami, and his heart beat more and more with

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the desire for her. Where was she now? Did she know that he had come back? Love knows no distance, yet after the severing of their marriage ties the Kataoka home, not far away, was farther from him than the stars in heaven. He could not visit even his aunt for news of Nami. When, the previous year, he had taken leave of his wife at Zushi, he never dreamt that it was their last good-bye. The cry of "Come back soon!" that she had uttered from the porch of the villa still sounded in his ears. . . . But to whom could he now say, "Here I am, back again . . . ?"

Tormented by this question one day, while he was on the way to Yokosuka, he got off at the Zushi station and mechanically took the path to the villa. The door was closed. He assumed that the people had returned to Tokyo and walked around the house. There was only the gardener about, clearing away the weeds.

The old servant raised his glance at the sound of footsteps. Upon recognizing the visitor he removed his *hachimaki*¹ respectfully and bowed, saying with an air of surprise, "Good day, master. When did you come back?"

¹ 'Hachimaki.' A kerchief that is rolled and tied around the head.

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"Only a few days ago. And are you well, Mokei?"

"Yes, sir, thank you," replied the old man.

"Are you here all alone?"

"Yes, sir. Madame the baroness my sick mistress remained here with Iku until the last of the past month. Then I was left to take care of the house."

"Went back last month? Then she's in Tokyo," murmured Takeo, in a subdued voice.

The old man continued.

"They returned to Tokyo before the general, my master, came from China. When he returned he left with the lady for Kyoto, and I believe that's where they are now."

"Kyoto? Then she must be all better," thought Takeo. "And when was it that they left for Kyoto?"

"Four or five days."

The old gardener suddenly recollected the state of affairs and at once grew silent, fearing that he had gossiped too freely already. Takeo understood what the servant was thinking, and grew very red.

Several moments passed before they spoke again. Then the old man, as if apologizing, said, "Now I'll open the door for you. Per-

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haps the baron would like to come in and have a cup of tea.”

“No. Don’t trouble yourself. I just came in on my way back.”

Takeo glanced about him. The garden had not changed, but the doors and the windows were shut and the fish-basin was dry. Dead leaves were strewn across the paths and from the trees here and there golden plum blossoms were falling. The roses, now in full bloom, covered the ground with their petals and filled the surrounding air with their perfume. Not a soul was to be seen and the monotonous chirping of the crickets was the only sound that disturbed the scene.

Takeo took leave of the gardener and set out on the road back.

Several days later he received orders to leave for the south to help repress some uprisings. He had spent ten days at his home. While his comrades were celebrating their return with noisy parties, the days passed most monotonously for him. His house, for which he longed so deeply while he was away, today meant nothing to him now that he had come back. It did not hold that which could fill the void in his heart.

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His mother, who suspected her son's feelings, allowed her bitterness to creep into her words. Takeo, feeling that she understood his attitude, experienced keen embarrassment when they were together. A barrier had arisen between them. Both mother and son, however, restrained themselves, and there were no outbursts such as had formerly occurred. Nevertheless, Takeo was further from his mother than he had been the year before. His heart could not be more distant. They parted coldly.

He was supposed to leave for Yokosuka, but having lost the train he decided to join his vessel at Kure, and so left on the 10th of June, sad and silent, on the train from Tokaido.

CHAPTER VIII

As Two Trains Passed

THREE persons came out of the temple of Obakusan at Uji, province of Yamato; a man of about fifty, stout, dressed in European fashion and holding in his hand a cane with a golden head, a woman of about twenty, of distinguished appearance, who was shielding her face from the sun's rays with a black silk parasol, and an old servant carrying a small traveling bag.

Three *kurumas* awaited them as they came out. The man, however, turning to his young companion, said, "The weather is so fine that we could take a little walk. Don't you think so?"

"Yes. Of course. Let's walk"

"You are not tired?" asked the old woman, solicitously.

"No. It'll do me good to have a short walk."

"Then let's go along very slowly and have the *kurumas* follow us nearby."

The group comprised General Kataoka, Nami and Iku. The day before they had come hither

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from Nara, and were now on their way to the Yamashina station, to return to Otsu.

The general had come back on the 31st of May, and had at once engaged in a long conversation with his daughter's physician. Two days later he had left for Kyoto with Nami and Iku. There he selected a quiet inn on the bank of the river, refused every invitation extended to him by friends, put on civilian clothes and gave his entire time up to his favorite daughter, whom he accompanied on her sightseeing tours about the city and its environs, seeking to divert her mind from her deep meditations.

Thus they visited the exposition, various temples and noted spots, and the large emporiums at Nishijin, where Nami bought silks and various gifts.

The first picking of tea was over, and the wind carried the perfume of the leaves that lay drying in the air. Groups of girls were engaged in the second harvest, scurrying hither and thither over the fields. The large tea plantations were divided here and there by yellow fields of grain, and from time to time could be seen the flash of scythes in the sun. The distant hills of Yamato were lost in a thin mist. . . .

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The river Uji, dotted by white sails, meandered among the fields. All at once, from a neighboring hamlet, came the merry ringing of the bells, announcing noontime.

Nami sighed.

From a path nearby came two peasants, a man and his wife, returning to work after their mid-day meal. The man carried a scythe across his shoulder; the woman kept talking ceaselessly, showing her blackened teeth. In her hand she carried a teapot. As they approached Nami the peasant woman stopped for a moment to look at her. The couple continued to talk, finally turning off into a side path hidden by the wild thistles.

Nami's eyes followed them. The man's large straw hat disappeared into the distance together with the woman's white kerchief, while the happy notes of the love song they had been singing were lost in the air, which was drenched with sunlight and perfumes.

Nami lowered her gaze to the earth. The general grasped her hand, saying with utmost kindness, "You must be tired, Nami-san. Aren't you?"

She shook her head in token of denial. He continued.

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"How quickly time flies! Do you know, Nami, when you were a little tot you used to kick me with your little foot while I'd take you pig-a-back riding? You must have been five or six years old then."

"That's so. I recall it very well," corroborated Iku. "When the baron used to carry milady on his back her little sister wanted to climb up, too, and she cried. . . . Even today I'll wager she would like to be here with us."

Nami's lips showed the trace of a smile.

"I'd like to ask a question, general, if I may be permitted," requested Iku, hesitantly. "Isn't the river we just crossed the Ujigawa? It's famous for the glow-worms that are fond of its banks, and also because there Komazawa, the hero of the noted drama, found his darling Miyuki."

"Good, good for you, Iku. . . . You're really a most learned woman!" exclaimed the general, laughing. "The world changes rapidly. When I was a boy the journey from Osaka to Kyoto had to be made in a junk, and the travelers were shut up in a sort of trunk. When I was about twenty a very funny adventure befell me. At that time Saigo and Kazedada came to Osaka, bringing with them the priest

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Gesscho; there were rather serious riots and I was sent there on service. The order came to me so unexpectedly that I had to leave at once and forgot to take money with me. What could I do? From here I had to go on foot, at night, all the way to Osaka, following the bank of the river." The general laughed at the recollection out of his happiest days. "Aren't you too warm, Nami? We'd better go back to the *kurumas*."

Iku signalled the *kuruma* drivers to stop; the three mounted the vehicles, which went off toward Yamashina across the fields of tea and grain.

Nami, her eyes fixed upon the gray hat of her father, who rode before her, fell into sad thoughts. This trip with her parent had not restored her good spirits; it was most depressing to be reminded at every moment that henceforth all joy was denied her forever. How sad it was to await consolation only in death,—all the more so because a father whom she loved tenderly must suffer this desolate wait with her! Both found a certain solace for their common grief in recalling the days of the happy, distant past.

At Kyoto Nami bought some silk garments,

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certain that she herself would never wear them, but choosing them carefully, in the thought that Koma, wearing them one day, would think of her.

Nami's love for her father was not enough to erase in her heart the remembrance of Takeo. She had heard nothing about him since she had learned that he had saved her father's life at Port Arthur. She did not even know where he was. But wherever she went, the thought of him accompanied her; she saw him often in her dreams. Ah, how ardently Nami wished to see him in person at least once before she died! The notes of the love song that she had just heard still echoed in her ears, and her thought went back to the two happy peasants who had disappeared into the distance side by side. . . . Oh! Despite their coarse clothes, they were happy! And she in her garments of silk!

Her eyes filled with tears. With all her strength she sought to banish them, to master her emotions, and a violent fit of coughing shook her delicate frame.

The general turned toward her uneasily.

"It's gone by, gone by," murmured Nami, trying to smile as she pressed her palm against

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her breast, where she felt a keen darting pain.

At the station they entered an east-bound train. They were by themselves, in a first-class compartment. Nami sat down near the open window, and the general, opposite her, began to read the paper. The train was on the point of leaving.

Another train, coming from the opposite direction stopped at this moment on the neighboring rails, and the conductors had already opened the doors, crying, "Yamashina! Yamashina!" The locomotive of the train which Nami had boarded let out a piercing whistle and the cars slowly began to move. As they passed by the second-class coaches of the train on the next rails Nami's eyes fell accidentally upon a young man, dressed in European fashion, whose face was buried in his hands.

From Nami's lips there issued an inarticulate sound.

"Oh! Nami-san!" cried Takeo.

The train increased its speed. Beside herself with joy and emotion Nami seized her violet handkerchief from her girdle and waved it through the window.

"Take care!" cried Iku with deep concern as she grasped Nami firmly by the sleeve.

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The general, too, thrust his head through the window and waved his newspaper to Takeo.

Faster and faster the trains increased the distance between them.

Nami still looked Takeo's handkerchief was fluttering in the breeze that had borne Nami's cry to his ears. Suddenly a sharp curve hid the lovers from each other. "Ah!"

There was a sound as of silk being torn. And he who had uttered it was now rapidly rolling toward the west in the departing train.

Nami covered her face with her hands, and fell upon her father's knees.

CHAPTER IX

Sayonara !

[Farewell]

THE evening of the 7th of July found many persons assembled in the home of the Kataokas. They all spoke in whispers. . . . Nami was at the point of death.

When, toward the end of June, the general had returned with her from the trip that was meant to divert her mind, the family saw at once that the poor girl had grown worse. The physician himself was forced, with surprise and grief, to confess that the disease had made rapid progress in its fatal work of destruction. The condition of her lungs had become far more serious and in addition had appeared a disturbance of the heart. A few days later a lamp burned continuously in the Kataoka home, and doctors came and went without cease.

Madame Kataoka, who was just getting ready to leave for a summer resort, deferred her departure.

Nami grew weaker day by day. The hem-

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orrhages and the attacks of suffocation came more frequently than ever, and would be followed by a state of coma. Every time that an attack of coughing would summon the general hastily to her beside, where he would support her tired head and look at her with compassionate affection, she mustered the strength to smile at him. In her hours of semi-consciousness she often murmured the name of Takeo.

The fateful day had come. The entire room was illuminated. Nobody dared to speak and the whole house was as silent as the tomb.

Two women came out of the sick room, so as to relieve the patient of all disturbance. One of these was Madame Kato; the other, the old Christian woman that had saved Nami's life on the cliffs of Zushi. She had not seen the sufferer since the previous autumn and now she had been summoned by Nami's express desire.

"I thank you for your kindness. She wanted so much to see you before she died. . . . I am sure that your coming has given her great comfort."

Madame Kato could scarcely speak, so great was her emotion.

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The old woman sighed, and did not reply. At last she asked, in a low voice, "Where is he?"

"They told me he was at Formosa."

"Formosa!" murmured the Christian woman, and sighed.

Madame Kato could not repress her tears. "If it weren't so far away," she managed to say, "we could have notified him. . . . She thinks of nothing but him, and wants to see him once again. But I'm afraid that by this time he has embarked, and besides with the strict discipline maintained on warships. . . ."

At this moment there entered Madame Kataoka and Chizu, who hurriedly murmured a few words to her mother; then suddenly she returned to the sick room.

Nami was lying upon a white bed, in the middle of a large room that was lighted by a few candles. Prostrated by the disease that had been tormenting her for two years, she looked now like a shadow. Her wan face was almost transparent, but her jet-black hair was still smooth, shining, and her eyes yet shone with a keen, intelligent sparkle. Beside the bed, the nurse moistened the patient's lips from time to time with a sip of cold wine, while

Iku, her cheeks thin and her eyes hollow, rubbed Nami's limbs, which seemed to be slowly freezing.

Everything was wrapped in silence. Only the labored breathing of the dying girl could be heard. All at once she opened her eyes and asked, in a very thin voice, "Is auntie here?"

Madame Kato stepped closer to the bed and said to her, "Were you able to get a little sleep? You feel better now, don't you?"

"I beg you, leave the room for a moment," said Nami to the other two women, who at once left.

When they had gone Madame Kato came closer still to the bed, caressed Nami's hair and looked fondly into her face.

Then Nami, with a trembling hand, took from underneath her pillow a sealed letter.

"Take this, auntie. . . . Give it to *him*, when I shall no longer be here. . . ."

Madame Kato wiped her eyes and concealed the letter in the folds of her girdle.

"Yes, my darling, I'll give it to him with my own hands."

"The ring this ring. . . ."

Nami placed her left hand upon her aunt's knee. Upon her finger shone the diamond that

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Takeo had given her on their wedding day. All the other gifts had been sent back to the Kawashima home, but Nami had desired to keep the most precious and dearest of them.

"The ring. . . . I'll take with me. . . . and wear it. . . . forever."

Madame Kato inclined her head without speaking. Her throat was stifled with tears.

Nami closed her eyes. Then she opened them again, saying, "How I'd like to know what he's doing now. . . ."

"Takeo-san is at Formosa, on duty. He thinks of us always. If it will be possible we'll beg him to come. . . . Nami-san, be calm. . . . I'll tell him about you and give him your letter . . ."

A faint smile appeared on Nami's lips.

Suddenly her face, at first pale, turned purple; her breast rose in a terrible spasm and cold tears slowly trickled down her cheeks.

"Oh! My heart! My heart!"

With the aid of her aunt she sat up somewhat, grasping the woman's hands in a vise-like grip as they contracted with the intensity of the pain. Her aunt started to call for the doctor, when a final attack of coughing seized Nami and a violent hemorrhage forced her to fall back upon the pillows.

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The doctor assisted by the nurse, sought to bring the sufferer some relief. He had the window nearby opened, and a gust of the fresh evening air blew in.

The moon had risen and its white light appeared through the branches of the trees.

The general, the viscountess, Madame Kato, Chizu, Koma, and Iku had all rushed to the bedside of the dying woman. A light breeze seemed to play with Nami's tresses; she lay colorless and motionless, as if already dead. The physician examined her face and felt her pulse, while the nurse held a candle whose light flickered in the wind.

Ten minutes went by. Then there was heard a gentle sigh and Nami's lips moved. Into her half-open mouth the physician poured a spoonful of wine. Another sigh was heard, this time stronger, and Nami murmured, "Let me go back. Let me go back. . . . Mamma, mamma dear, I am coming to you. . . . Am I still here?" she asked when she opened her eyes and looked upon those standing about.

The moon was high in the heavens and now its light fell directly upon Nami's face, enveloping it in a fantastic aureole.

The doctor looked at the general and yielded

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to him the place at Nami's side. The general pressed the cold hand of his daughter.

"Nami, listen to me. I'm your father. . . . We are all here beside you. . . ."

Nami turned her eyes from one to the other; they no longer shone. At last she looked into the general's face; his eyes were full of tears.

"Papa dear. . . . be brave. . . ." she whispered in a weak voice.

A few tears slowly rolled down her cheeks as she moved her hand slightly to grasp that of her father.

"Mamma?" she then whispered.

The viscountess drew near and gently wiped the tears that bathed Nami's cheeks. The latter grasped the hand that had caressed her and murmured, "Mamma, I'm going away. . . ."

The viscountess's lips trembled; she covered her face with her hands and left the room without uttering a word.

Madame Kato spoke some phrase of consolation to Chizu, who was weeping bitterly, then approached the bed and took Nami's hand, which had fallen across the pillow. Koma, too, came near and kneeled beside her sister. Nami raised her trembling hand and lay it upon Koma's head.

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“Koma-san. . . . Sayonara! Farewell!”

Nami's breathing became more labored than ever; Koma, with a shaking hand, poured another spoonful of wine between her sister's lips. Slowly Nami raised her eyebrows and cast a last look about her.

“Ki-chan. . . . Mi-chan?” she asked, with a supreme effort. But the children did not reply. . . . They had been compassionately removed from the house of sorrow. Someone else responded, but Nami did not seem to hear.

Iku, struggling with her tears, came over to the bed and pressed Nami's hand.

“Iku,” murmured the dying woman.

“Oh! My mistress, take me with you. . . . Don't leave me here. . . .”

After the poor sobbing servant had been taken from the room silence returned once more.

Nami closed her eyes and her mouth, and the shadow of death began to fall over her countenance.

The general leaned over to her ear and asked, “Nami, have you nothing to say? Open your heart freely. . . .”

Hearing herself addressed by a dear, fa-

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miliar voice, she opened her eyes and looked at her aunt.

"Nami-san, I'll do everything you asked. Go to sleep peacefully you're going to meet your mamma," said Madame Kato tenderly.

A faint smile came to Nami's lips; she closed her eyes and breathed her last sigh.

The white, cold light of the moon still illuminated the face of the dead. The smile seemed still to be hovering on the colorless lips. . . .

Nami had sunk into her last sleep.

Three days later she was buried in the cemetery of Aoyama.

A silent, reverent cortège followed her coffin and many friends came to pay the last respects to the departed. Those who knew the sad story could not restrain their tears as they beheld the general, broken with grief, beside the closed grave of his favorite daughter. Even strangers were moved at sight of old Iku, who was giving free vent to her grief, and could not be removed from the grave.

Although the flower season was past, many flowers were sent by friends, since the deceased was a young lady, and were placed upon the

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grave. One large floral offering, however, brought by a man of about forty years, was refused. . . . It was a basket of flowers bearing a card, with the inscription, "From the Kawashima family."

CHAPTER X

The Meeting at the Cemetery

FOUR months had passed since Nami's death.

The clock had just struck four in the afternoon. The shadow of a sumach stiffened in the icy grip of the frost stretched across the garden, lighted by the rays of a pale sun. The widow Kawashima, stouter than ever, opened a shoji¹ and came out upon the veranda, approaching a large water basin.

Noticing that it was empty, she began to cry furiously, "Matsu! Také!"

Upon hearing the violent commands the two women ran to the scene, one from the garden, the other hastening upon the veranda. The face of each bore an expression of terror.

"Where's your head? Look here. . . . I've told you a thousand times. . . . Is that how you heed me?"

She seized a dipper and herself filled the

¹ 'Shoji.' The regular Japanese screen-window.

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basin with water. The two girls looked on, motionless, holding their breath.

"Off with you!" cried the widow, and they ran away at once.

She was still muttering to herself when one of the girls reappeared, bowing humbly.

"What is it?" asked the widow.

"A gentleman. . . . Yamaki-san."

At sound of this name an ironic smile flitted across the widow's lips.

Yamaki had been a rare visitor to the Kawashima home after his daughter Toyo had returned to her paternal roof.

"Tell him to come in."

Yamaki entered. His countenance revealed a certain embarrassment.

"Yamaki-san, you've become quite a stranger hereabouts."

"How's that?" asked the visitor, as if to excuse himself. "If that's so, it's certainly not intentional on my part. I would have come sooner and more frequently if it hadn't been for my being overwhelmed with business after my return from the scene of the war. I'm happy to find the baroness in good health."

"They say that you made a heap of money in the war! Is that so?" Indeed, this fact had

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contributed in no small measure to the widow's displeasure.

"Oh, well. People are quick to gossip. . . . The profits hardly repay my effort. I must congratulate you on Takeo's promotion. I see in the newspapers that he was decorated for bravery. The baroness must certainly be proud of him. Where is he now?"

"Takeo? He arrived yesterday."

"How's his health?"

"Fine. Fine. But he hasn't the same merry spirits as before. . . . This morning he went out very early and hasn't returned yet."

"You must be very glad to have him back again. . . . General Kataoka's family is very cruelly stricken. You simply can't do anything for diseases of that sort. It was very prudent on your part to avert misfortune just in time. . . ."

The widow Kawashima looked very sternly at him when he named the Kataoka family.

"You can't imagine what unpleasantness that family has caused us. They cost us a mountain of money, brought discord into the bosom of my home, and as if that weren't enough they called me a very demon. Listen Yamaki: On the day of the funeral I sent a

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large bouquet of flowers with Tazaki. Would you believe it? They refused them! Isn't that disgraceful, Yamaki-san?

Upon first hearing the news of Nami's death Madame Kawashima had been disposed to feel compassion, but after the refusal of the flowers this kind sentiment gave way to anger.

"They were wrong. Certainly, anyone would be justified in feeling offended. . . . May I announce the engagement of my daughter?"

"What? Your daughter betrothed? And who is the lucky man?"

"A young college graduate, now employed at the head offices of the Department of Industry and Commerce. I believe you know him. He was very close friends with Chijiwa. . . . Poor Chijiwa! His death grieved me so much!"

"A horrible thing, war. . . ." sighed the widow Kawashima. "And when will the wedding take place?"

"We have arranged it for the day after tomorrow," replied Yamaki. "Your presence would honor us very greatly. My wife wanted to come in person to invite you, but it was impossible. . . . The baron will favor us by coming too, won't he?"

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The widow lowered her head and was silent. Then she looked at the clock, which was just then striking five, and murmured, "I'd like to know what's taking Takeo so long."

A naval officer holding a large bouquet of white chrysanthemums entered the cemetery of Aoyama from Minamicho Street.

It was the day of Niiname-sai.²

The autumn sky was calm and clear. A pale sun cast its light over the burial ground. . . . A few leaves were falling from the cherry trees and the sazankwa³ filled the air with perfume. Once the noise of the *kurumas* rolling over the pavement had died in the distance no sound came to disturb the quiet of the garden of the dead. The confused clamor of the city penetrated to this spot like an echo, — a sad, fantastic echo of wretched human lives.

Through these paths of peace walked a young lady with weary step. Her eyes were swollen with tears and she held by the hand a little boy of about six, dressed like a sailor. As they passed Takeo the little boy asked, "Mamma, is that man a naval officer, too?"

² 'Niiname-sai.' The day of the offering of new rice to the Kami (the gods) and to the Emperor.

³ Sort of camelia.

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The lady brought her handkerchief to her eyes without replying.

The young officer walked slowly along, looking about and stopping now and then to read the inscription upon freshly made graves. At length he reached a grave surrounded by small pines and bushes. He pushed open the little iron gate and walked into the enclosure. Suddenly his gaze fell upon a stone well worn by time, at the side of which was another bearing an inscription newly made. A young pine cast its shadow over the stone and some yellow leaves had fallen upon it from a nearby cherry-tree. In black characters there was inscribed the legend:

KATA-OKA NAMI-KO NO HAKA

Tomb of Nami Kataoka

The officer could scarcely remove his gaze from that cold inscription; he remained for several moments as motionless as a statue. . . . Only an uncontrollable trembling agitated his lips, through which, from time to time, issued a deep sigh.

Takeo had returned on the preceding day.

After the moment's meeting with Nami dur-

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ing his trip to Formosa five months before he had received no news of her until the day upon which a letter from Madame Kato informed him of Nami's death. He returned at once, questioned the viscountess as to the details of Nami's final moments. And now, recalling the sad story, he could not restrain the tears that fell copiously upon the cold grave.

The happy days of their love, the ecstasy at Ikao, the sadness of their visit to the temple of Fudo, the last evening spent at Zushi and then, the final meeting, as brief as a flash. The voice crying "Come back soon!" still echoed in his ears. . . . He had returned once, only to find her no longer his wife. He had returned a second time, and she was gone forever.

"Oh! Nami-san, why have you abandoned me?" he exclaimed through his tears.

A gust of wind that showered him with leaves awoke him from his revery. He wiped his eyes and bent over the tomb, scattering the leaves so that he might deck it with fresh flowers. Then from his pocket he drew a sheet of paper: Nami's letter. He opened it for the hundredth time. The handwriting did not bear the slightest resemblance to her usual style. The letters lacked form, the ink was pale and

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blotched, and here and there the writing was stained with tears.

"I write to you, beloved, because I feel that I shall soon die. My days are numbered. I hoped so much to see you before I should die! Our brief meeting, the fleeting moment that Heaven was so kind to send us, filled me with joy. But in that very moment I was unable to express my feelings. . . ."

The image of Nami, with her face thrust through the window, waving her handkerchief to him, rose clearly before Takeo's eyes. He raised his eyes, they encountered nothing but the cold grave and the swaying pine.

He resumed his reading of the letter.

"I lived a life of misfortune and my wishes never came true. But I cherish hatred for no one. My body returns to the earth, but my spirit will always be near you. . . ."

"Papa, someone is in there," cried the shrill voice of a child. Then the same voice continued, "Papa, it's friend Kawashima!"

Takeo, whose hand still grasped Nami's letter, raised his eyes in surprise and his gaze met that of General Kataoka, who was approaching. Mi-chan had rushed forward to greet him.

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Takeo lowered his eyes and did not move.

All at once he felt his hand grasped in an affectionate, hearty grip.

“Takeo-san, my heart, too, is broken. . . . I, too, have suffered.”

The two men clasped their hands firmly as the tears rolled down their cheeks.

Several moments passed. The general wiped his eyes and placing his hands upon Takeo's shoulder he broke the silence.

“Takeo-san,” he said firmly, “Nami is dead. But I am your father just the same. You still have a long road to travel. Courage, my boy! The misfortunes that befall us should give us strength for new battles. . . . It's only through trials that we become men and our hearts are steeled. It's a long time since I've had the pleasure of seeing you. Come, let's walk off together, and tell me all about your experiences at Formosa.

THE END

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